

# Bitter Sweet

ONE DOLLAR

WESTERN MAINE  
PERSPECTIVES

JULY, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY TWO

VOLUME FIVE, NUMBER SEVEN

**Holman Day:  
Master of the  
Maine Vernacular**

**Building a  
Greenhouse**

**Scott Nearing's  
99th Birthday**

**Wild Strawberries**

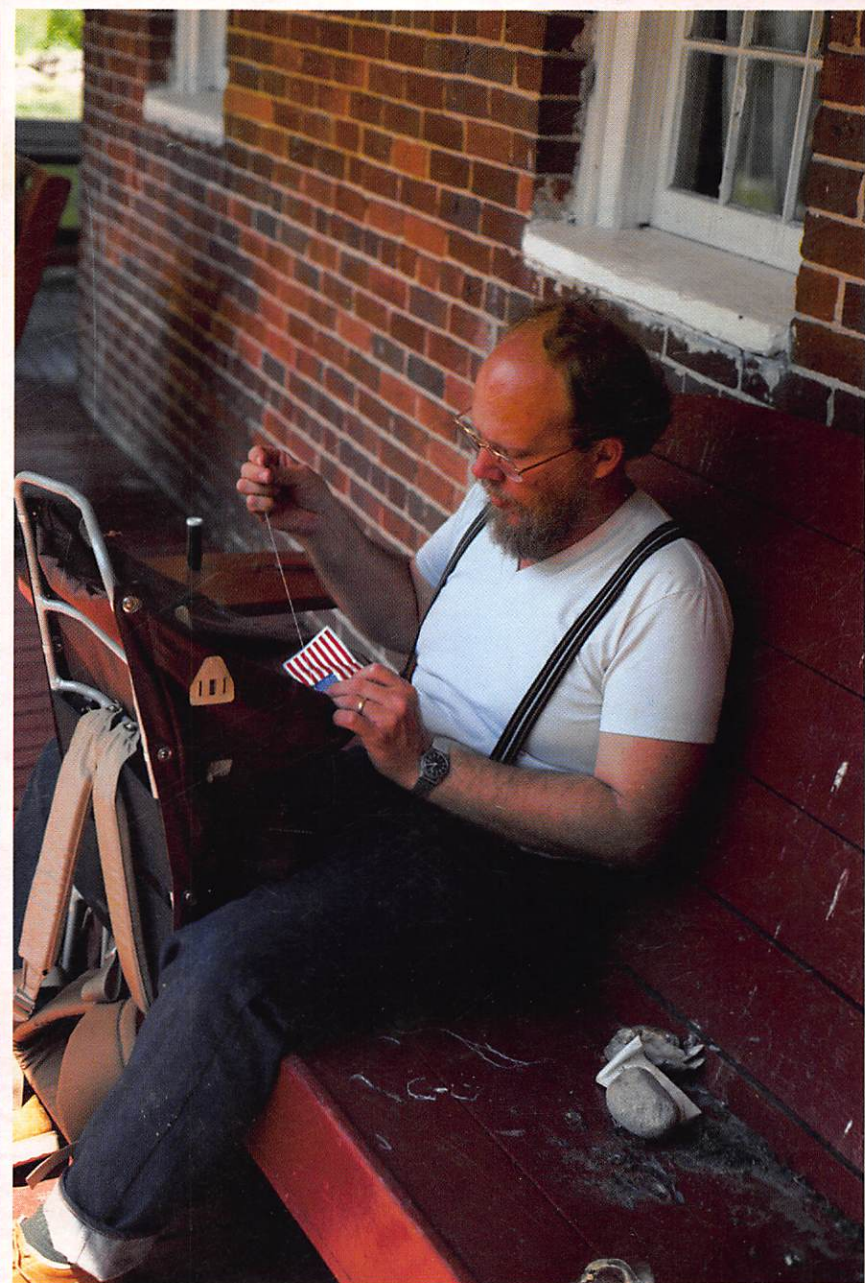
**Poisonous Plants**

**Climbing  
Old Speck**

**Sampling  
Tim Sample**

**Wilburs' Antiques  
in Greene**

**Charlotte Snow:  
From Movie Star  
To Maine Housewife**



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Photo by Robert Johnson

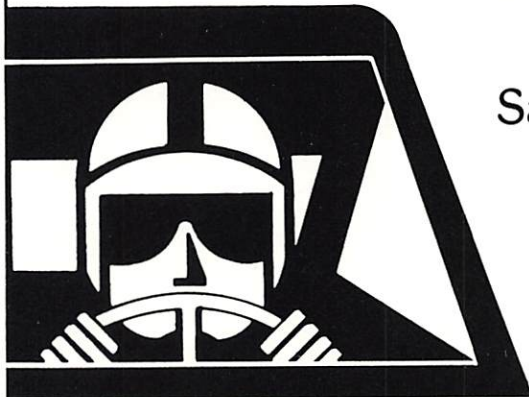




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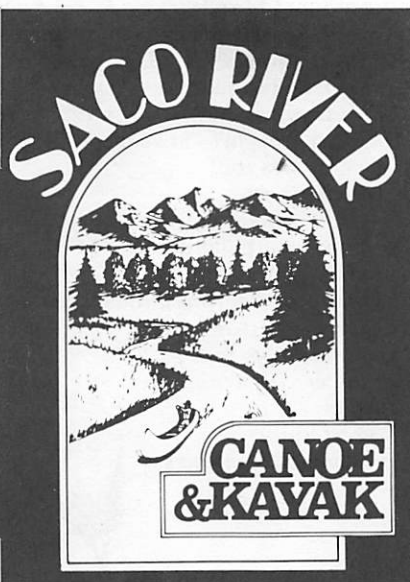
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## Bitter Sweet Views

I come from a very funny family. Never a conversation passes between one member and another but what there's a joke in it somewhere—or something that's happened to one of us which we think will make the other laugh.

Maine humor—it's one of the world's favorite topics, and one which never stops amusing people. But what is it really?

Many comedians have tried to mimic it. But most native Mainers, upon hearing the imitation, reflect that prob'ly they had a great-uncle Ed or a cousin Sarah, who did it better, without half tryin', natch'ly.

If it were just dialect, author Holman Day (featured on page 17) wrote it down about as well as anyone ever has—and, unlike some other Yankee humorists, his material has remained a timeless resource.

Maine humor is something else, though. Of course, it's a large dose of common tongue-in-cheek rural sagacity and barbed wit, coupled with a certain archaic phraseology—as Ray Cotton explores on page 33. Probably that's true of North Carolina or Texas or Oregon humor, as well.

We've no doubt there's a lot of truth in our new cartoonist Tim Sample's opinion (page d) that it's the dry observation of life rushing past on its way to nowhere in particular. Good Maine humor sort of sneaks up on you: often it's a long tale, with the native Yankee laughing at himself but somehow, still, getting the best of someone else—usually the city slicker, or the out-a-stater, or some such superior-feeling person. It's not cruel ridicule, you understand, just self-deprecat-ing wit and a good come-uppance.

I'm sure that real laughter has gotten Mainers through a lot of tough, trying times. And that's the point, really. Wherever it comes from, we'll share it with you—because we feel a sense of humor and the ammunition to feed it just might be the secrets of a long and contented life.

*Nancy Marcotte*

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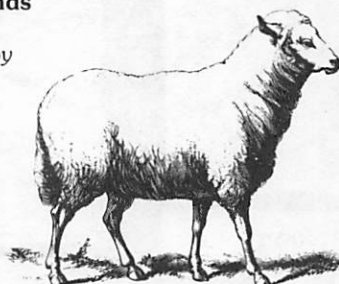
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Peter C. Allen, Bruce H. Day,  
David E. Gilpatrick, *Publishers*

Nancy Marcotte, *Editor*

Paul Brook, *Advertising Manager*

Diane Barnes, André Chabot  
*Advertising Sales*

Martin Dibner, *Consultant on the Arts*

Janis Kibbe, Paula Hutchinson  
*Contributing Artists*

*Mailing Address:* P. O. Box 6, Norway,  
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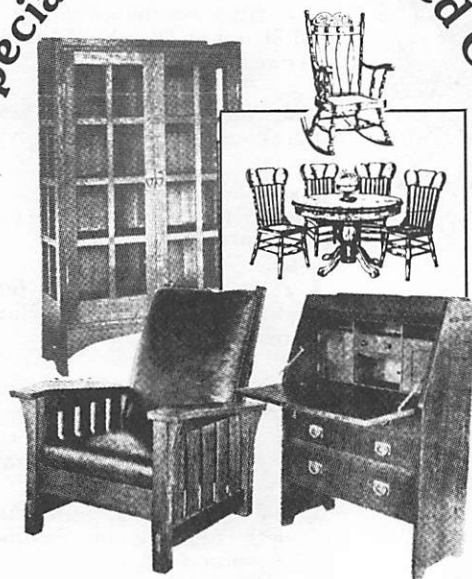


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## *Charlotte Snow: Out of a Storybook into Norway, Maine* The Story of a Once-Upon-A-Time German Movie Star *by Pat White Gorrie*

Timing is everything.

World War II toppled many things, and the career of Charlotte Dalys was one of them.

But perhaps that has been her fortune rather than her sorrow. She had a fairytale life throughout her youth in Germany; and now she is safe, secure, and serene here in Norway, Maine—taken care of and loved by a comfortable big-bear-of-a-man, John Snow. Almost everyone hereabouts knows John. He runs the Marina on Norway Lake.

Almost no one knows Charlotte. Hers are the days of sweet retirement in an immaculate, cheery house, with her poodle Inky and dachshund Fritzie for company; with pines and bird-song outside every window. The smile, the skin, the eyes are young. She shines with an innocence and joy, as if Time stopped ticking inside her at age 25. Her mind is quick; thoughts and images rush out of her like children playing leapfrog, tumbling all over the place.

There was a time when the name of Charlotte Dalys (her family name was Barendt) was a household word, especially in Hamburg where her trip to stardom began. Born in Danzig

(Gdansk), Poland, into a family of five children, she was raised strictly, disciplined with love, and feels it forged her character. Her mother's first husband died while fighting in a little village near Moscow. Years later, Charlotte's brother Robert found the grave there; wrote and told them of it; then, ironically, tragically, was killed in the same village.

But life went on. Her mother remarried. There were dances in the rural village near Hamburg where Charlotte grew up—dancing with wooden shoes to accordion music.

At age 14, schooling stopped for everyone but "rich kids" and then one went off to learn a trade, if one was not among the privileged few who went off to college. Most girls hired out as domestics—"house daughters." Charlotte was so skinny and pale no one knew quite what to do with her. She was plopped on a farm, to be "fatted up."

"For three months I worked like a dog!" she says. "Milked cows, dug potatoes, helped with the haying; you name it, I did it, from sun-up to sun-down. But I was fed! Oh, was I fed! Fried potatoes, bacon, eggs, salami, all kinds of meat and vegetables. I

grew brown and strong. At the end of three months, I didn't look like the same girl.

"So *then* I went to work as a house daughter, but every spare minute I had, my girlfriend Freda and I would steal away to shows. When I was fifteen I answered an ad for chorus girls. And that was the beginning!"







*The  
Faces of  
Charlotte  
Daly*





She insists she wasn't beautiful. "But I had . . . personality!"

Only look at her photographs. There is no question—she was not only beautiful, her face had animation, character. It could look a thousand different ways. Her perfect bone structure made her exquisitely photogenic. But Charlotte was too excited, too in love with life, to be over-absorbed in her looks. At a rapid rate, she was growing, assimilating, developing—as a person, an intelligence, a talent.

"The couple who owned the troupe were responsible for developing my mind as well as my ability as a performer. She was an opera singer from St. Petersburg. He was the director. He recognized my thirst for knowledge and fed me books! I read the classics; fell in love with the writings of Victor Hugo. When I read 'The Laughing Face,' I fell so under its spell that for weeks I could hardly talk to anyone.

"My character was strong, my morals good. They put me in charge of the other girls to see that they behaved. Of course, now and then one of them would sneak out after bedcheck, but it was difficult to police every move they made. I didn't smoke or drink—I set a good example. Probably it is why I do not know show my age." She laughs. "And *we schaft, der svendigh nicht*. (He who sleeps does not sin.) I take a nap every day!"

Eleanor Powell was her idol, for Charlotte was a dancer first, an actress second, or an equal combination of the two. "Oh, the Hungarian Rhapsody by Liszt! It was my favorite. If you could have seen it! Such a beautiful number—so moving."

Costumes and sets were elaborate and Charlotte made her own clothes. Pink organdy rhumba dresses with yards and yards of ruffles. Nothing drip-dry then. "I seemed to spend half my life ironing starched dresses and the other half performing in them."

She points to a photograph. "See this Cossack number? I needed bullets in the pockets. How to find bullets? I used clothespins—they looked just right.

"So many quick changes! Everything had to be designed to be jumped into and out of in a flash. Even the shoes had to be ready in the exact spot."

Mirrored stairways, golden balconies, acres of red velvet plush—the



lavishness of the props equalled anything Hollywood was producing in the movies.

"For five years I trained, learned, worked hard. When the other girls were flitting about, I was sitting under a tree reading Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, or my beloved Victor Hugo! I was young and full of life, but at the same time, I was disciplined and serious. And so Peter and Maria Wolsky, the director and choreographer, made me a star.

"Posters and billboards bearing my face were everywhere. Even on trees! The stage career led to motion pictures. I felt that two angels were always there with me, one looking over each shoulder!

"I appeared in Hamburg and people would walk all the way from Dresden to see me perform. Even in the midst of ruins, I could make people happy. Such a good feeling!

"But the war got worse and worse. Hamburg was heavily bombed. I considered myself lucky. My angels were there! I survived. I was not crippled or

blind. Finally—everything went *kaput*. Not just for me, but for many, many people."

The range of Charlotte Dalys' emotions (as revealed in her photographs and in a person-to-person interview) would have rivalled Garbo. The face would have been a threat to Dietrich. She could be as innocently sexy and winsome as a Marilyn Monroe. Her dancing had the verve and acrobatic ability of Eleanor Powell, her idol.

But she was *herself*, unique, original. There is no question in this writer's mind: she would have been another "legend"—another superstar—had not the war intervened. But more contented? Happier? Probably not.

After the war she formed her own troupe. Then, in 1953, she came to America on a visitor's visa to see a girlfriend on Tripp Lake in Poland, and while here she attended a dance in the bandbox on Norway Lake.

"She was wearing white. There was something very special about her. She looked different from anybody else I'd ever seen." John Snow was smitten. Soon she was, too.

It was three years before Charlotte could return here and they could begin their married life.

There are no regrets. "My life has been like a story—a book! It was hard work, but there was something about being a performer! It enables you to transcend everything else.

"There can be sorrow and tragedy all around you. But the minute you are on that stage and the lights in the audience go out, the spotlight goes on, the curtain goes up . . . you smile . . . you send out love to the people who are watching you . . . you begin dancing and you forget everything else! It is the greatest fun in the world."



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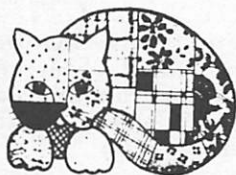
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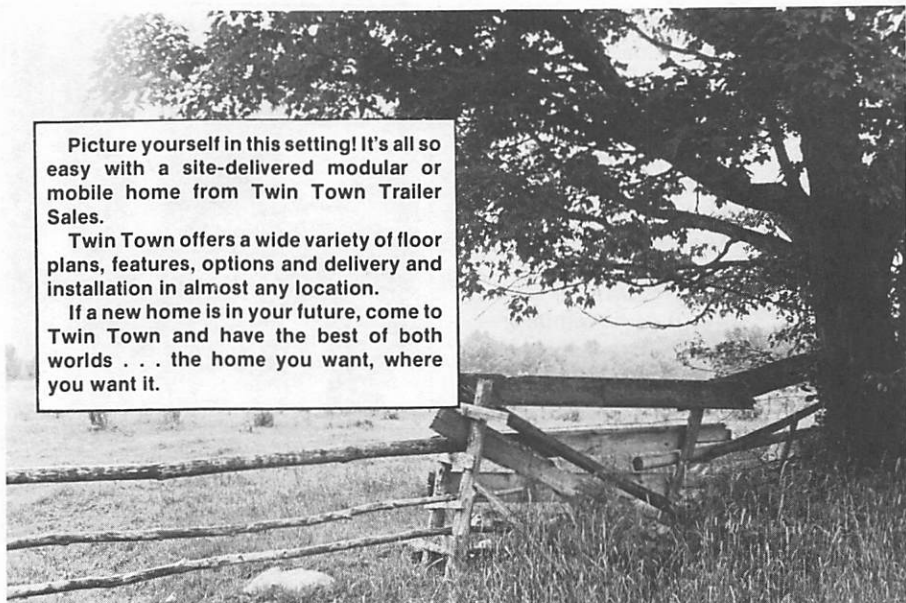
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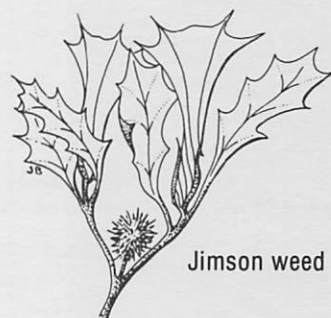
# Perilous Plants



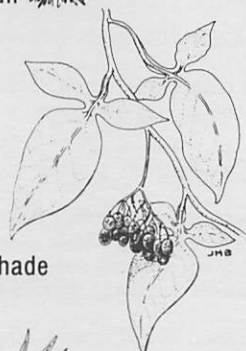
Daffodil



Lily-of-the-valley



Jimson weed



Nightshade



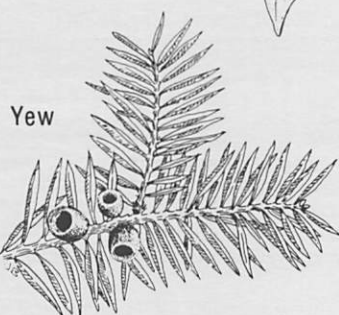
Pokeweed



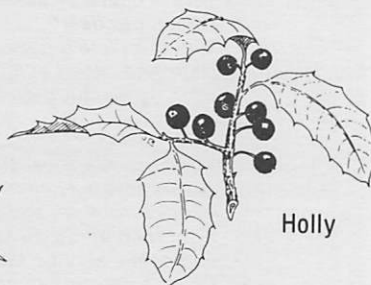
Buttercup



Iris



Yew



Holly



Hydrangea

## Plants can be deadly as well as beautiful.

Poisonous plants are everywhere. More than 700 species of plants located in the United States and Canada are known to have caused illness or death in humans, and no doubt the list is still incomplete. **The Maine Poison Control Center** (Portland, Maine, Toll-free telephone 1-800-442-6305) has given us permission to run several months' worth of helpful information on the perilous plants around us and what to do if you suspect poisoning.

Children are often attracted to the colorful fruits, blossoms, berries, or leaves of plants, but must be taught to keep all plants out of their mouths. Some of the most common of our house and garden plants have been found to possess the most toxic qualities.

**In case of a suspected poisoning:** contact a physician or the Poison Control Center **immediately**. Try to secure a specimen of the ingested leaf, plant, or berry. It is almost totally impossible to make positive identification of a plant by description over the phone. Some of the signs to look for which indicate possible poisoning are listed on the following page:

## Outdoors

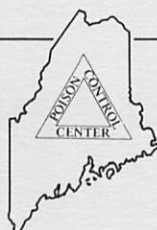
This listing is by no means complete. There are many more toxic plants.

# Poison Symptoms

<i>Plants</i>	<i>Toxic Part</i>	<i>Symptoms of Illness - Degree of Toxicity</i>
<b>Flower Garden Plants</b>		
Bleeding Heart (Dutchman's Breeches), Poppies	<i>Foliage, roots</i>	<i>Nervous symptoms, convulsions</i>
Delphinium, Larkspur, Balladonna	<i>Young plants, seeds</i>	<i>Nausea, nervous symptoms, twitching muscles, paralysis, death.</i>
Foxglove	<i>Leaves, seeds, flowers</i>	<i>Irregular heart-beat and pulse, usually accompanied by digestive upset and mental confusion. May cause death.</i>
Iris	<i>Fleshy underground portions</i>	<i>Severe but not usually serious digestive upset.</i>
Lily-of-the-valley	<i>Leaves, flowers</i>	<i>Irregular heart-beat and pulse, usually accompanied by digestive upset and mental confusion. May cause death.</i>
Lupine	<i>All, especially ripe seeds</i>	<i>Breathing difficulty, death.</i>
Monkshood	<i>All, especially roots</i>	<i>Digestive upset and nervous excitement; juice in plant parts fatal.</i>
Snowdrops, Star-of-Bethlehem	<i>Bulbs</i>	<i>Vomiting and nervous excitement</i>
<b>Vegetable Garden Plants</b>		
Potato	<i>Foliage, green parts of vegetable</i>	<i>Intensive digestive disturbances and nervous symptoms.</i>
Rhubarb	<i>Leaf Blade</i>	<i>Kidney disorder, convulsions, coma, followed by death.</i>
Tomato	<i>Vines</i>	<i>Digestive upset and nervous disorders.</i>
<b>Ornamental Plants</b>		
Azaleas, Laurel, Rhododendron	<i>All parts</i>	<i>Nausea, vomiting, depression, difficult breathing, prostration, coma. Fatal.</i>
Daphne	<i>Berries (red or yellow)</i>	<i>Severe burns to mouth and digestive tract, followed by coma and death. A few berries can be fatal.</i>
Goldenchain	<i>All parts, especially seeds</i>	<i>Excitement, staggering, convulsions, coma. May be fatal.</i>
Hydrangea	<i>Buds, leaves, branches</i>	<i>Severe digestive upset, gasping, convulsions, sometimes death.</i>
Privet	<i>Berries, leaves</i>	<i>Mild to severe digestive disturbances. May be fatal.</i>
Yew	<i>Foliage, berries (less toxic)</i>	<i>Depresses heart action. Death is usually sudden, without warning symptoms.</i>
<b>Wild Plants</b>		
Bittersweet	<i>Leaves, seeds, roots</i>	<i>Vomiting, diarrhea, chills, convulsions, and coma.</i>
Buttercups	<i>All parts</i>	<i>Juices severely injure the digestive system.</i>
Jack-in-the-pulpit	<i>All parts, especially roots</i>	<i>Intense irritation and burning of tongue and mouth.</i>
Jimson weed (thorn apple), (datura)	<i>All parts</i>	<i>Abnormal thirst, distorted vision, delirium, incoherence, and coma. May be fatal.</i>
Morning Glory	<i>Seeds</i>	<i>Large amounts can cause severe mental disturbances followed by death.</i>
Mushrooms	<i>All parts</i>	<i>There are so many different varieties which are poisonous that no wild mushroom should be ingested. One or two bites of poisonous types can cause death.</i>
Nightshade	<i>All parts, especially the unripe berry</i>	<i>Intense digestive disturbances and nervous symptoms, often followed by death.</i>
Poison Hemlock	<i>All parts</i>	<i>Stomach pains, vomiting, CNS paralysis. May be fatal.</i>
Poison Ivy and Oak	<i>All parts</i>	<i>No known antidote.</i>
Pokeberry, pokeweed	<i>Roots and berries</i>	<i>Intense itching, watery blisters, red rash.</i>
		<i>Burning in mouth, severe digestive upset. prostration, convulsions.</i>

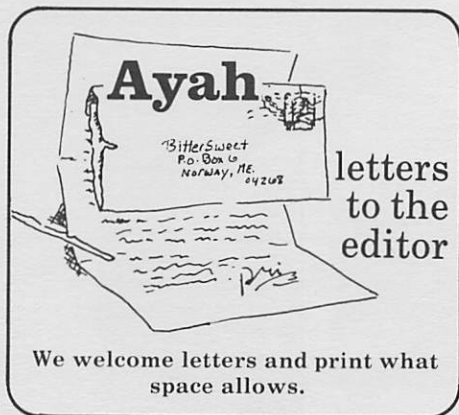
**Bruce Campbell, Supervisor of the Maine Poison Control Center, reminds us that plants are the origin of many of our drugs and thus contain potentially harmful chemicals. We will feature more next month on poisonous plants around your house.**

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## OOPS!

Some of my friends who have read "Brotherly Love" in the May issue have hinted that I must be slipping. Near the end they became confused.

Checking my carbon copy, I find that somehow three vital words got left out. Inserting the words, "pinning his hands" at the point marked on the enclosed clipping makes a lot of difference.

Anyhow, I still like BitterSweet. It's the greatest.

Ray Cotton  
Hiram

**Ed. Note:** Oh, dear, we are sorry. All we can say is: it happens in the best of places. Perhaps it would help to tell you that you are not the only one who suffers our occasional goofs. If you check the editorial column "BitterSweet Views" for June, you will see that we do it to ourselves! Obviously, I did not mean to say (page 8) "her plants was gone."

Anyhow, we still like Raymond Cotton—be looking for a very funny Cotton piece on the Horseless Carriage soon—and one on page 33 of this issue as well.

This is the corrected sentence: "At just the wrong moment the bar slipped, pinning his hands to the ground, the softness of which saved them from serious injury . . ."

## INTRIGUING

I was introduced to BitterSweet through a proud grandmother showing me the contribution to Young People's Writing by Melissa Stearns, Bates College in the October, 1981 issue. As pleased as I was to read this, I find that it is the whole issue that intrigues me . . .

I must tell you that your whole publication merits commendation. I have Vermont Life, Country Journal, Yankee, and it must be the size—it does not take a week to read. You are tops.

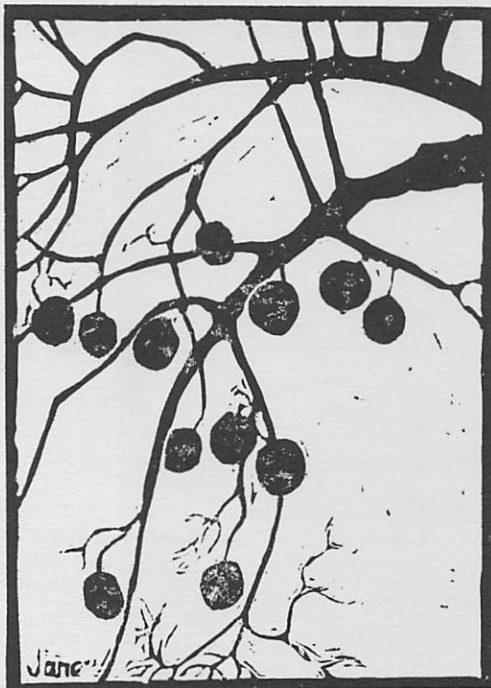
Leah M. Cole  
Littleton, New Hampshire

Page 40 . . .

Print by Jane Gibson

Maine is a way of life and BitterSweet is a part of it.

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# BitterSweet Notes



Helen Nearing



The House That Helen Built



Scott Nearing

## THE NEARINGS

by Martin Dibner

### A fond birthday look from an old friend

The postcard said, quite simply, *Come see us soon. Scott well, but waning. Can't expect to keep even him forever. Planting potatoes today.* The color photo on the other side showed a section of a fine fieldstone house, newly built, its upper story timbered; it had about it a look of grace and durability for the ages.

The message was signed *Helen*. I tossed a sleeping bag into the car trunk and left the next morning.

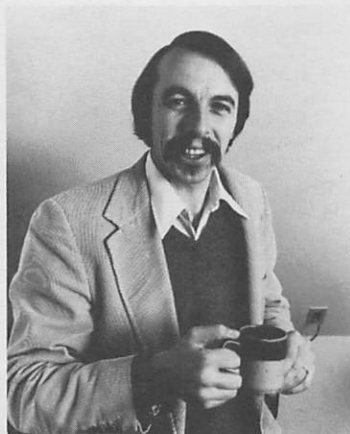
I was in Harborside by noon, scooping a hearty brown soup out of a wooden bowl and talking to the Nearings about Scott's latest caper—as “witness” to the life of John Reed in the award-winning movie *Reds*. (Reed, in case you didn't know, was the American journalist who took part in the Bolshevik Revolution and wrote about it in “Ten Days That Shook The World.”) Warren Beatty plays Reed and Diane Keaton his free-wheeling wife, Louise Bryant. Scott Nearing plays Scott Nearing, who knew them well and reminisces judiciously about those times. *Reds* is more than a movie. It's a living document of the American left in the turbulent period of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

They're all gone except Scott. Most American greats who were his contemporaries are gone—FDR (1882), Hemingway (1898) . . . Scott Nearing, born 1883, will be 99 come August 9th.

No celebrated figures in the American scene today can match the images of the Nearings in the pure down-to-earth tradition of our pioneer forefathers. Theirs is a love of the land; respect for the rights of others; veneration for music, art, and the written word. Their philosophy—to live the good life—has been an ennobling influence on thousands of young people in all parts of the world. Helen is the musician, homemaker, house-builder; Scott is the gardener, social scientist, author of at least 50 books. In a society increasingly more violent and materialistic, many people have been influenced by the tranquil, fulfilling, self-sufficient lifestyle the Nearings have been living and touting for over half a century.

But waning? After lunch, I helped Scott bring in firewood for the stove. His was a lighter armful than I remembered from past times, but his step was steady and his eyes sure. It was like watching a fine tho-

roughbred past its prime go through its paces with the strength that comes more from the spirit than from muscle, and with the dignity that age can never change.



## SAMPLING TIM SAMPLE

by Nancy Marcotte

Singer, songwriter, graphic artist, author, comedian in Yankee dialect—all describe the multi-talented and irrepressible Tim Sample of Waterville. Familiar to many for his “Mainers” cartoon calendars and his humorous books like “How To Talk Yankee,” Tim Sample has become a contributor to *BitterSweet*.

Each month, beginning with this issue, Norway Savings Bank will bring you one of Tim's wittily observant cartoon slices of Maine life. We're honored that he, his publisher Thorndike Press, and the bank have given us this opportunity to share with you some of his delightful work.

Tim, who has lived in such places as Palmyra and Pittsfield, thinks Maine humor relies on the “absurdity of the situation as seen by a dry guy watching the world go by.” Ayah, we guess he's right. The artist will soon release “The Junk of Marshall Dodge,” a fitting recorded tribute (with Bob Bryan of “Bert and I” fame) to his friend, the late humorist.

Photo by Bob Demers.

Page 16 . . .



# Wilbur's Antiques

by Dorothy Prentiss

Whether you are an antique collector or not, you are in for a real treat when you stop to visit Albert's Acres, located on Rte. 202 in Greene, home of Wilbur's Antiques. The number of beautiful items will boggle your mind!

Everything from lovely 100-year-old Oriental soapstone carvings, to a Pilgrim flax wheel over 200 years old, to a "one-of-a-kind" Shaker arm chair, to some of the most valuable pottery jugs in the world might be on display here. One particular unique vase was an incredibly smooth "vase of silk" from France—its exterior finish like silk to the touch. There were break-fronts over 7 feet high, marvellous grandfather clocks, old paintings, antique hand mirrors and china as well as antique desks, buffets, tables, and stands.

The day I visited was warm and sunny, and at first Wilbur's didn't seem different from any of the other antique shops sprinkled around the Maine countryside. On closer inspection, though, the low, rambling shed (the shop) that houses numerous old furniture pieces, antique glass and miscellaneous items came to resemble a flea market concession. I discovered that neither aforementioned assumption was correct.

Wilbur's Antique Shop is a virtual "diamond bed" of antiques—each one with a unique history and a special story all its own. Almost all of these antiques come from homes in Greene, Turner, Lewiston-Auburn, and surrounding towns. To Rena Wilbur the antique business is more than a passing on of material goods; it is a handing down of history and beloved treasures to someone who understands and will serve as custodian.

"People call me because they know me and trust me," says Rena. "Some of the nicest things I have are from the people in and around Greene."

Rena is a gentle, smiling woman whose petite and youthful appearance belies the fact that she is a veteran of personal illnesses as well as a suc-

cessful business person and noted public speaker.

The first thing Rena shows me is an old, rusty, weather-beaten 1928 Model A pickup truck that belonged to her father during her teen years. At that time, in order to complete her high school education, Rena rode each day to Lewiston with her father and walked to school from a central location where the truck was parked while her father went to his job in the opposite direction. From Rena's tone and description, I can almost picture the winsome young girl sitting proud and happy beside her father on these daily runs in the old truck.

Rena says, "This truck keeps me humble."

Near the truck, in the center of the yard, is a huge bell, originally from a one-room school in Ringland, Montana. It was previously owned by a Mr. Ford and is signed by American Bell and Foundry, Michigan. Rena and her husband had originally purchased it to place on top of a one-room

school house in Greene that they owned at the time. It was their intent to reconstruct the school house into a Museum. When Rena became seriously ill, however, they were forced to forfeit their dream. The bell is all that remains of a dream lost.

To care for Rena and their small children, Phil Wilbur was forced to give up his job, but mounting medical expenses soon made it necessary for the Wilburs to look for other income.

Antiques, which had always been a hobby and a source of enjoyment, then became their livelihood as well.

In the beginning the Wilburs tried to separate their business from their home life. They maintained the business at Albert's Acres while living at the Sedgley Place—formerly the home of a Boston Post Gold Cane holder, the oldest resident of Greene, Bill Sedgley.

In 1976 the Wilburs sold the Sedgley Place to their son, Phillip E., and consolidated their business and home at one location.

*Rena and her father's truck (below):*



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The Sedgley Place is now one of the nicest restaurants in this area, perpetuating the Colonial atmosphere of what had been a popular stagecoach stop in the 1700's. Later it was a successful farm and antique shop.

Permanently established at Albert's Acres, the senior Wilburs began the process of restoring the farmhouse back to its original country style. Entering the kitchen with Rena is like a step back into the past. In the center of the room is an old wooden table with a blue enamel pitcher holding daisies and other wildflowers as a centerpiece.

"This table had belonged to a priest who was a friend of mine. It has a unique feature that allows it to convert into a wooden bench. This was a style common in the 1700's, born of necessity. Many early homes were lacking in space and this was a practical way to provide extra seating during the long winter evenings."

To the left of the kitchen doorway is a lovely fireplace with Dutch ovens and close to it a narrow cupboard which was extremely popular in the 1800's and is found in many homes in Greene and Turner.

Having shown me Frank Gordon's clock (made by a former owner of Albert's Acres) in the hall, Rena's next stop is the dining room—a lovely room full of many beautiful treasures. But what attracts me first is a beautiful fruit bowl with a base that serves as the centerpiece for the dining room table. This delicate china is decorated with hand-painted birds and flowers and inscribed by Pauline Chessman Hamilton.

Pauline Hamilton, a local artist, was recognized and listed with Maine Artists. Many persons from this area will remember Pauline's brother Roswell Hamilton as the one that gave them their driver's test at the Auburn Motor Registry.

Strikingly beautiful and a little overpowering are two identical twin bookcases in the dining area. Made of oak in a dove-tail design around 1840, they are outstanding and feature ornate pomegranate and West Wind heads. The glass-enclosed shelves make them functional as a curio display or china closet.

Near the bookcases and equally breathtaking is a large buffet. Representative of those used in many homes in America around 1840, this Cat o' Nine Tail design buffet has lovely

glass mirrors and staggered shelves. Its beauty is enhanced by all the lovely antique china and crystal it holds.

By contrast, Rena now shows me some very small sewing baskets. Originally made by the Shakers, these are intriguing little boxes covered with an unusual bronze leather. The original contents of tiny thimbles, scissors, and cotton thread on wooden spools are still intact. If the Shakers were anything, they were practical, as demonstrated by the metal "bird heads" Rena shows me. Shaped like birds, these little metal clips were used by the Shakers as an "extra hand" to hold whatever cloth they were working with.

Although some of the things Rena has shown me inside her home are personal possessions, some are not and will eventually be sold.

Rena tells me, "I feel privileged to have so many treasured antiques pass through my hands. I can't always keep them, but I feel privileged to have them for even a short while."

The Wilburs do maintain a separate shop where the general public is free to browse.

"I have in past years spent almost all of my time here," says Rena as we enter the shop, "but I am seriously thinking of putting up a sign and asking customers to knock at my door. I found this past summer that people were viewing my shop as an extended yard sale and were not knowledgeable about antiques at all—and really didn't care."

"I am a friendly person and enjoy talking to people whether they buy or not, but I am deeply hurt by those who are dogmatic in their approach and suspicious about my motives. I just don't know how to get through to that kind of person. I want them to share with me the intrinsic value of what I have. I have many, many lovely antiques and would love to help people find what is important and special to them."

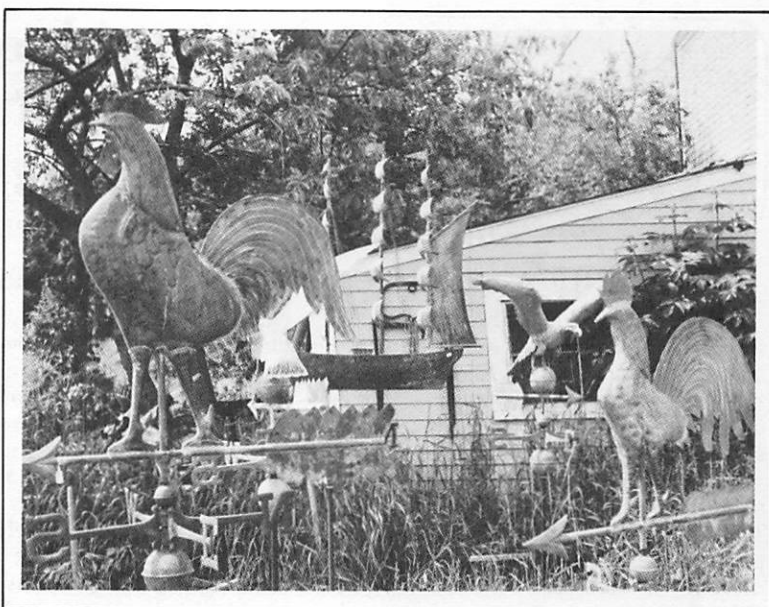
This shop is where the Wilburs conduct most of their business and it contains just about everything—even some less expensive but different and fun-to-own items. Rena demonstrates this by picking up a huge hammered metal bowl, a grape carrier from the early 1800's.

"This is very dear to someone, even though its material value may be rather low. It is a most unusual item





(Left) part of the china collection in the shop. (Right) authentic weathervanes on display at the Wilburs'.



from France and was sold to me by someone special."

There is an array of antiques here, something for everyone—many beautiful pieces of china, much lovely furniture, some that is termed primitive.

Rena explains: "Primitive antique items are not for everyone, but for those who are knowledgeable about them. I have some very sought-after ones."

Primitive antiques are just basic furniture, usually homemade and designed for practical, functional purposes.

Every February, the Saturday before Valentine's Day, Rena and Phil Wilbur sponsor an Antique Show and invite most of the well-known dealers from Maine and New England. Many participate and it is always a very happy and exciting time for them.

"We are seriously considering conducting additional shows," says Rena. "They are well-received and have multiplied in dealer and public participation every year. This really pleases us, and it's much fun."

It is evident that antique collecting can be profitable as well as fun. In these times when the interest rate does not keep up with the inflation rate, antique collecting may well be a lucrative alternative to a savings account.

Rena also participates in the annual antique show sponsored by ZONTA—a civic group in Maine that supports mental health. All proceeds from the show go to help others. Rena was also

honored by the Associated Press recently as the one antique dealer from Maine who could best describe what Maine has to offer in the way of antiques.

Rena and Phil Wilbur probably know more about the hidden and not-so-hidden treasures in Maine than anyone else. Rena has even begun classes in her home on a weekly basis to help people understand antiques. She explains why:

"Many antique dealers are skeptical about holding lectures or teaching classes about antiques. They feel they can keep the antique business a closed market by leaving the general public fairly ignorant about what constitutes an antique and the various classifications. I do not feel that way. I want to share my knowledge with others. Only in that way will people learn to enjoy and preserve that which is old and deserves a rightful place in the heritage of antiquity. Everyone should respect and preserve that which is a beautiful part of history and participate in the passing on of what has been."

The Wilburs perpetuate this passing-on. Theirs is a story not just of a business, but of a way of life.

*Dorothy Prentiss is a free-lance writer and editorial consultant in Portland. This piece on the Wilburs was originally published in the Pine Tree News of Greene, Sabattus, Wales, Leeds, Monmouth, Litchfield, Turner, and Winthrop.*

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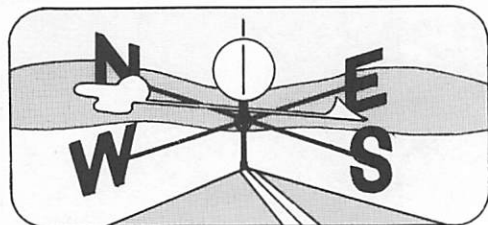


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# Thinking of Country Things

by John Meader

## IS THERE A GREENHOUSE IN YOUR FUTURE?

Spring and fall are when you'd like to have one most, but summer's the time to consider building a greenhouse. We've had one in use for three years now and I have some thoughts on the subject that may be helpful.

It seems to me that there are several considerations to take into account. They are: heat, light, water, cost, and profit or benefits.

Heat—much is made these days of *solar greenhouses*. The word "solar" is applied, I gather, to indicate that the greenhouse gets all its heat from the sun. This is a fine ideal, and it encourages greenhouse builders to seek maximum heat efficiencies through proper siting of the facility, double glazing, heat reservoirs, and so on.

But, presently, greenhouses totally solar-heated are probably not quite workable for our region. (Technological advances may soon change this.) There are too many cloudy cold days in January. Thus one has a choice: heat in winter, or let freeze.

Before I discuss this choice I can't resist describing one ingenious approach to the problem. A greenhouse grower in England raises rabbits, you see, underneath the greenhouse benches; the number quoted, I believe, was 4000 rabbits. Rabbits give off a lot of heat, which is the primary purpose of this arrangement—to use animal heat as a supplement to solar as a cheap source of thermal energy.

The rabbits do help considerably to heat the greenhouse. The main crop is lettuce, and doubtless the rabbits are rewarded with the broken heads and waste leaves. The manure can be composted and worked into soil mixes for future crops. Ammonia from urine and manure may be trapped in the soil overhead in the benches. The rabbits can be bred and the excess population sold for meat. Why isn't this the next best thing to perpetual motion?

But back to the question of to heat or not to. Unless one has a source of

waste heat (greenhouses are being built around nuclear generating plants for this reason), I strongly favor not heating for several reasons. First, not much happens in a greenhouse in December, January, and February anyway, unless supplemental lighting is provided. Secondly, I think that freezing for a period helps to reduce the likelihood of insect and fungus problems in the greenhouse; a problem the beginning greenhouse-keeper may not anticipate.

There are drawbacks to not heating. The water system has to be drained. The foundation of the greenhouse has to be footed deeper or otherwise somehow insulated to keep the frost from getting under and heaving the structure with great danger to the glass or to the plastic skin.

The attraction of solar heat is obvious, and one does what one can to capture and conserve it. The face of our greenhouse (it's attached to the end of the barn and accordingly has a single face) is pointed something like fifteen degrees east of south, which is considered the best orientation for solar heating in our area. The back wall of the greenhouse is covered with rigid insulation painted black. The face is double-glazed, with six inches of dead air.

Under the benches is a heat reservoir composed of five gallon plastic pails containing water charged with calcium chloride to prevent freezing. I used twelve-and-a-half pounds of calcium chloride to five gallons of water making the water proof against freezing to something like minus fifteen degrees, I think. Without calcium chloride, I'd have to empty the pails every fall, and there are fifty.

There's a reverse side to the coin called heat, and that's the matter of cooling, of adequate *ventilation*. A good, tight greenhouse can overheat very quickly on a bright day even in March. Our greenhouse has square 2' x 2' vents at each end, a door into the barn that helps vent, and a section of

glass on the main face that lifts; providing approximately thirty-five square feet of venting for 135 square feet of glass (the main face and the south-west end) and around 900 cubic feet of interior space (or air to be heated).

With all these arrangements, our greenhouse is frost-free from March 1 to December 1, at no heating cost after the initial investment, and can be kept (by venting) around eighty even on hot summer days since the summer sun glances off and since the greenhouse draws cooler air from the interior of the barn. (In winter, the reverse: the greenhouse helps to heat the shop.)

*Light*—In any field where technicalities are involved, or may be, self-appointed experts crop up. That's the case with greenhouses, too, with debate centering on questions of glass versus plastic versus fiberglass; of what slope is best for the main face or faces; and of the best compass direction. I prefer to skip technicalities where possible and to go with whatever seems to work.

Our greenhouse does. Its outer skin is glass, the inner is a product called Kalwall Sunlite II, twenty-five mils thick. The slope of the main face is forty-five degrees. A somewhat steeper slope might be argued for, to induce the snow to slide off more readily. In the main, our light seems sufficient, though tomatoes will get leggy if held inside past six weeks. (Better to move them to a cold frame where the glass can be removed entirely daytimes.) All materials tend to filter out ultraviolet light and somewhat reduce visible light, so choice of materials should be dictated by structural requirements and cost, primarily. Kalwall Sunlite is said to be especially formulated for passage of light.

Quality of light is important—equally so is quantity. Our greenhouse is situated to admit direct sunlight from sunup to sundown year 'round. Even so, by September plants such as tomatoes slow their growth considerably, due to the reduction in hours of light.

Not long ago I read a newspaper article touting greenhouse add-ons to houses as a source of free heat. The article went on to report glowingly how you could raise your own vegetables in winter, and so on. It's a bit like the exchange in Shakespeare's *Henry*



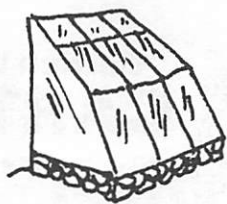
IV where Glendower claims, "I can call spirits from the vasty deep," to which Hotspur reasonably replies, "Why, so can I, or so can any man. But will they come when you do call for them?" In this case, you can raise your own vegetables, but the question is will they grow when you plant them in winter? No, not unless you greatly add to the available daylight with artificial lights, six hours daily or even more, at a cost in fluorescent lights, wiring and timing devices that will probably at least equal the original cost of the greenhouse itself.

**Water** - Greenhouses are very thirsty things, and before one goes any distance at all in deciding upon greenhouse construction, the availability of sufficient water must be examined. If the existing water supply is not adequate, the average family probably had better think twice. In our case, practically all our greenhouse water is collected from the barn roof, caught by an eavestrough that carries water to a plastic pipe that runs to a water tank overhead in the greenhouse. Occasionally I have to lug water from the brook; otherwise rainfall, pipes, and tank, plus gravity feed do the job.

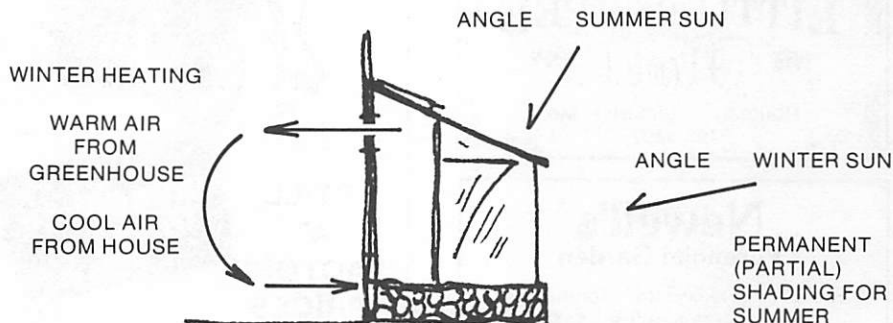
**Cost** - In terms of controlling cost, the most important issue is size—to build what one really needs and no more. The impulse is to assume you need a lot of bench space, but experience indicates the opposite. It's interesting and pleasing to see how much can be accomplished in a seemingly small area.

Our greenhouse is eight feet by eighteen, and has approximately 120 square feet of bench surface. Out of this area, last spring, came something like 120 tomato plants, 2000 leeks and onions, 25 pepper plants, 600 lettuce plants, celery, cauliflower and cabbage, 200 cukes *plus* 100 snapdragons, 50 marigolds, 50 salpiglossis, 50 assorted herb plants, numerous other varieties, foxgloves, candytufts, and many, many other flowers. All of this *cannot* be done solely in 120 square feet. We use cold frames as a back up and maintain a flow from greenhouse to cold frame to garden plot. Leeks and lettuce move out to make room for tomatoes; tomatoes move out to give room to cukes.

Accordingly, I'd say the ordinary home gardener could easily operate with half the space of our greenhouse, with an additional 40 square feet of



A SEPARATE VENT SYSTEM COULD BE EMPLOYED TO CAUSE NATURAL CIRCULATION IN ADDITION TO A DOOR OR WINDOW FROM THE HOUSE



cold-frame.

Cost of such a greenhouse? I've just "costed-out" what our 8 x 18 structure would come to at today's prices, and my guess is that materials could be bought for around \$350.00. And, material costs can be radically reduced if one scavenges around. As an example, if one purchased fiberglass for the outer skin of an 8 x 18 greenhouse, the expense would be around \$80.00. I bought second-hand storm windows and spent \$20.00.

The walls (that is, the area between the footings and the glass) can run to considerable expense if we're talking either cinder blocks, or wood with insulation, or asbestos hardboard with insulation. There are less expensive options. One is to sink the greenhouse into the ground to glass level using poured-concrete walls; in this case drainage must be given careful consideration. Another is the route I took—to build the walls of field stone laid up with mortar, and then to bank the walls to glass level with soil. This approach avoids drainage problems and provides insulation to the walls and most importantly to the concrete footers underneath. Material cost of walls for my method figures out to be \$30.00, for masonry and Portland cement, and for sand. (Yes, there are many hidden costs—tractor-work horsing home the stones; tractor-work hauling in the banking; gloves, for rough stone is very hard on gloves; wear and tear on the vertebrae . . .)

Some costs are, or should be anyway, unavoidable. Insulation, for example. And wood preservative. I treated the entire interior wood with Cuprinol Green. The stuff, since it contains copper, is expensive, but worth it; even necessary, I think.

For a greenhouse, then, about 10' x 8', say, we're talking material costs of \$200.00, and this includes enough calcium chloride for the under-bench heat reservoir. This does not include costs for piping in water.

So far we've been thinking about initial outlay costs, but a word or two should be said about on-going costs. These are basically those of maintenance. Most greenhouses require quite a lot, since the interiors are close to tropical while the exterior temperatures can fluctuate greatly, putting a great deal of strain on materials.

There's another maintenance requirement as well: control of insect and disease problems. Control of these things is crucial; the difference between good success and poor, between pleasure and grief. The problem is that greenhouses provide an ideal climate, warm and moist, for certain insects and diseases. Once established, they will thrive. Two rules apply, both preventive. First, beware plants from other greenhouses; beware friends bearing gifts. Second, take action beforehand. Every spring before I put our greenhouse into operation, I spray it with a combination of mild

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fungicide and short-lived pesticide. A minor suspense is involved, but an important one.

**Benefits** - No need to dwell on the obvious benefits of being able to start one's own plants for transplant, so I'll touch on some of the other benefits. Yes, you can extend the growing season in fall, even without supplemental light. For example, I've started tomato plants in June, set them in pots and raised them outside until frost, then brought them into the greenhouse to produce fresh tomatoes through October. They will slow down due to reduced light, but you'll get some fruit. We also take up chive and parsley plants in the fall and then force them along in the greenhouse in March.

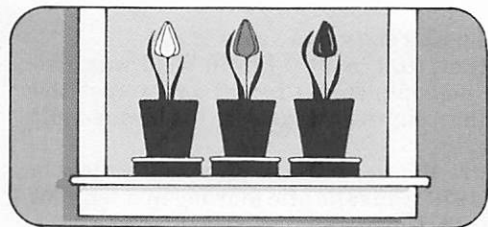
A greenhouse is also very useful in another regard: as a place to store and cure, or dry, certain plant materials. We use the greenhouse benches to dig and cure onions and shallots, and once these have been cleaned and bagged we bring in gladiolus bulbs. A greenhouse would be equally good for storing and drying corn or small quantities of peas or beans. The trick, of course, is to keep the greenhouse well-vented but warm, to hold humidity at a minimum.

Even when it's not serving some horticultural purpose, the greenhouse gives value, as a source of solar heat. Connected to a house, and perhaps augmented with a fan, I should think even a small greenhouse would make a sizeable heat contribution on sunny days in winter. On sunny days in spring our greenhouse is the sole source of heat for my rather drafty shop.

There's an important but intangible benefit as well—call it an “up-lift.” A greenhouse makes up a very special small kingdom. It's meant to protect and encourage plants, but I believe it can do much the same for people. Rainy days it's nice to hear the rain on the glass. Sunny days when it's still cold outside, one sort of lingers, as it were (not to say “loafs”) in the midst of warmth, humidity, damp odors, and green stuff.

*John Meader writes and farms with his wife Pat in Buckfield. He adds this footnote to his column this month: “This is not necessarily to endorse the product, but the address of the manufacturer of Sunlite is: Kalwall Corporation, 1111 Candia Road, P. O. Box 237, Manchester, N.H. 03105.*





## Potpourri

Gardening Tips by  
Margaret Harriman

### JULY

July, typically, is hot, not altogether pleasant weather for gardening. Weeds grow faster than vegetables and flowers; so, therefore it's a constant battle as to who wins. Try to get out there weeding early in the morning before the sun gets too high or in the late afternoon to early evening, watering then also (never in the heat of the day). I'm usually so saturated with insect repellent that my family won't even come near me—wearing a hard-hat smeared with Crisco to catch some of the little devils. It works well, looks ridiculous. I don't need a scarecrow, but I feel great.

For large flowers, now's the time to de-bud your roses, being careful that your rose beds don't dry out.

Start saving seeds from annuals and perennials, most particularly sweet william, hollyhock, and delphinium. Be sure the seeds are thoroughly dry before you put them in jars, otherwise they may mildew and you'll lose them. I usually make a planting at this time of seeds from these plants and would plant lupine and forget-me-nots if I had them; putting them in a special garden for starting perennials to be transplanted next spring. Remember that the soil is much more crumbly and drier now than your spring planting, so seeds must be firmly planted, tamping down soil carefully on all freshly-sown seeds.

Fertilize with bone meal and water plants thoroughly. This means a good soaking—a slow-running stream, letting the hose run for an hour or so before moving location, making sure that soil is wet deep down and not just on the surface.

Don't pinch back your chrysanthemums after mid-July as the bloom will be affected. If you've been too busy to get to them before now, it's better to let them go as they are than to try now. Instead, use your time to divide old clumps of iris and perhaps trade some with friends and neighbors.

I used to have what I called a friendship garden at a former home. It was filled with plants from friends with whom I traded some of my old favorites. It was a joy and a happy reminder as I watched Aunt Tressa's iris and mother's pinks come into bloom. Perhaps this would be a thought for each of you.

For double-your-pleasure, cut delphiniums back right after blooming—they'll bloom again in September or October.

July and August sun can be murder on your lawn, so keep your lawnmower blades up so that grass is cut no shorter than two inches. A brown crew-cut is attractive only on a handsome man, not on your lawn.

Fertilize your dahlias with 6-10-10 or a natural fertilizer for bulbs. Make monthly applications and cultivate the soil—rewarding! Tall growing varieties need to be staked, starting when they're about one foot tall.

A word of caution with fertilizers and weed killers. Be sure that you read the directions carefully—not just once, but twice before using them. They may be more of a hindrance than help. The old ounce of prevention/pound of cure saying surely applies to this.

My dad used to put three wooden matches in with each pepper plant. "Just enough sulphur," he said. His garden was always gorgeous and very productive, so try it and see for yourself.

Dry flowers to look for are early goldenrod, yarrow, sweet everlasting, rabbits'-foot clover, and Queen Anne's lace. Dry all of these by hanging upside down in small bunches in a dry, dark, and airy place.

Harvest the fruits of your labor: peas, bush beans, spinach and beet greens as well as chard. So welcome—so delicious. Thank you, Mother Nature, you're beautiful.

*Mrs. Harriman, a long-time grower and lecturer, lives in Limerick*

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No matter that he was sixty-five years of age.

No matter, either, that in 1980 Philip Weld was also sixty-five when he completed a record sail across the Atlantic in less than eighteen days with his Maine-built trimaran, *Moxie*.

Solo sailer Gerry Spiess, with the philosophy "less is best," made his 1979 transatlantic journey in a ten-foot sailboat, *Yankee Girl*.

Bill Dunlop of Mechanic Falls, Maine, knows these and other names, but not as a casual student. He is destined, it seems, to become one of the most unique of all solo sailors.

Even though Bill had no engine or electricity on his thirty-five foot sloop, *The Enchantress*, he never doubted that he could sail solo to England. (See *BitterSweet*, Winter 1981.) He made it—over and back.

On August 30, 1981, he and his cat Seaweed set sail from Portland to sail *The Enchantress* into the Bermuda Triangle. Several mishaps along the way, including a broken rudder, a malfunctioning bilge pump that nearly swamped them, strange magnetic disruptions, a crunching encounter with a coral reef off Eleuthera, and a freighter which nearly ran them over added spice to that voyage, but he made it back in one piece from that trip, too.

You'd think that, after that, a man would want to rest for awhile. Not Captain Bill.

This past June 13th, the adventurer planned to set sail for England in a nine-foot boat, without engine or electricity, to establish an indisputable world's record. All winter he worked on the boat with Moe Russo of

North Shore Yachts in North Sebago. It has a twelve-foot mast, a cabin measuring seven by two-and-one-half feet, and a fiberglass hull—but no room for Seaweed.

No, he doesn't have a death wish. It's just that Bill Dunlop is a risk-taker, and likes the exhilaration of life on the edge. Just ask his wife of twenty years, Pam.

At a boat show last March, contest winners Mr. and Mrs. Ed Chaney of Otisfield named the nine-footer *Wind's Will*, and Dunlop liked the name. It was christened on May 9th at Maine's Taylor Pond Yacht Club.

Another sailor, Walter Cronkite, wrote Bill to say that his previous trips have to be "the most unpublicized ocean ventures in recent times." But Bill doesn't seek publicity, just the challenges of solo sailing and world records.

As you read this, Bill is alone in the middle of the Atlantic, struggling to reach England. And dreaming of his next adventure.

We hope.

*Drigotas is currently writing a book about the adventures of Bill Dunlop.*

## BILL DUNLOP

by Frank Drigotas, Jr.

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Even the casual student of solo sailing knows the names.

Joshua Slocum was the first to circumnavigate the world solo in his thirty-seven foot yawl, *The Spray*. Then both he and his boat vanished forever in the Bermuda Triangle in the fall of 1909.

Sir Francis Chichester completed his 1967 solo sail around the world in 225 days aboard *Gypsy Moth IV*.

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# Master of the Maine Vernacular

*Holman F. Day*

(1865 - 1935)

Auburn's Humorist,  
Poet, Novelist

by Edith Labbie

*Holman F. Day wrote rich humor without malice and hatred. He was happiest when writing about Maine characters he met in the woods, on farms, and in small villages. He understood them and captured their vernacular authentically.*

*He easily penetrated their rough exteriors, searched out their motives and thoughts and presented them in such a way that none ever resented his characterizations.*

Even during the days of his greatest success, Holman Day was unassuming, democratic, a good mixer.

He was a bookworm as a little fellow; he had preferred reading to playing and his parents encouraged him. When he was fourteen, he put out his own newspaper on foolscap, written with pen or pencil.

Day was chosen the poet of the class of '87 when he was graduated from Colby College. His first journalistic position was as an apprentice on the *Fairfield Journal*. He got five dollars a week for writing editorials and taking care of the publisher's horse! It was during this apprenticeship that he developed his homespun style.

His column, "Evenings In A Country Store," drew favorable comments but his employer claimed: "Anyone who can't clean a horse any better than you can wouldn't know enough to write like that!"

Next he got a job as Editor of the *North Adams Sunday Press* in Massachusetts. But the thrill of being a big-city newspaperman soon evaporated and the homesick young man chucked his job to return to his beloved Pine Tree State.

During the winter of '87-'88 he was Managing Editor of the Union Publishing Co. in Bangor. Then he and two young partners scraped up \$500 and bought the *Dexter Gazette*. Their goals broadened and they took on the *Monson Weekly Slate* and the *Eastern Slate* and consolidated the two publications.

Holman Day savored the heady wine of editorship and endured the bitter gall of financial embarrassment. To supplement his income he became the correspondent for several Maine newspapers. It was his accounting of Down East happenings—both factual and legendary—that made his by-line a great attraction.

The editor of the *Lewiston Evening Journal*, Harry E. Andrews, spotted Day's work and made him an offer. Day gladly exchanged the uncertainty of being a publisher for a dependable salary. At first the young writer was made manager of the Lewiston paper's Portland News Bureau. A year later he was brought back to the main office as The State of Maine Correspondent.

He was given specific assignments as well as plenty of freedom to roam throughout the state picking up feature stories. He loved to travel to meet people and have a variety of experiences. This was the period when he became aware of the wealth of material available in his native state.

The *Journal's* next editor, the noted Arthur G. Staples, realized that Holman Day was one of the best newspaper essayists of his generation.

Staff members of the *Lewiston Evening Journal* recalled the times when Day would sit on the edge of his desk in the old *Journal* block at the head of Lisbon Street, swinging one leg as he spun yarns for casual callers or members of the staff.

His stories of the fairs, reports of murder trials, and other such features are still unsurpassed. As editor of the "State Chat" column, he wrote a poem a day; they were so popular that other newspapers regularly pirated them. To read one of them today is to hear our rural ancestors speaking. Listen!

"Doctor Pluff, who lived in Cornville, he was hearty, brisk, and bluff, Didn't have much extra knowledge but in some ways knowed enough. Knowed enough to doctor hosses, cows, an' dogs, an' hens, an' sheep. When he came to doctor humans, Wal, he wasn't quite so deep.

Page 22 . . .

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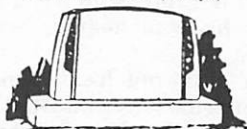
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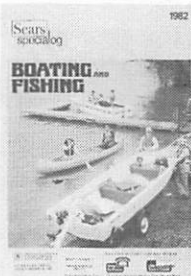
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# UP OLD SPECK

by Robert Johnson

---



*Old Speck, the summit in clouds, as seen from Rt. 26 to the south. (All photos by the author.)*

Reaching an elevation of 4180 feet amid scenery unmatched in western Maine. Old Speck is the state's third highest mountain. Crown of the Mahoosuc Range, it is much less well known than Maine's two higher peaks, Katahdin (5267 ft.) and Sugarloaf (4267 ft.). Old Speck, however, offers some of the most interesting hiking trails in Maine and spectacular views of unspoiled wilderness.

A frequent hiking companion and I decided to climb Old Speck. The mountain is located in Grafton, about 85 miles north of Portland, near Maine's western border in Grafton Notch State Park. From Portland, Maine's Route 26 passes through Gray, Norway, Bethel and then to

Newry where it follows the Bear River through Grafton Notch. While there are limited camping facilities at the Appalachian Mountain Club lean-to near the base of Old Speck, the last full accommodations for the non-camper are in Bethel. The Bear River Cabins in Newry, however, offer a quiet, clean, if rustic place to sleep—though no meals or cooking facilities are available.

We chose to "semi-rough" it. Equipped with enough money for one night's stay at the Bear River Cabins, the old reliable Svea camp stove, some grocery store victuals, a flyrod and a lot of optimism, we headed from the Portland area to Newry on a late spring Saturday morning. A pleasant visit to the Shaker Community at Sabbathday Lake (see **BitterSweet** June, 1981) provided a welcome

break in our travels and a scenic spot to eat our picnic lunch. Travelling on to Newry, we arrived at the junction of Rt. 26 and U.S. Rt. 2 in the midst of an afternoon thundershower. Sheltered from this deluge in our cabin—which incidentally had no radio, t.v., or telephone—we took an opportunity to review our plan for the morning and check out our gear.

Good, well-broken-in hiking boots worn with a thick pair of woolen socks are the most important pieces of equipment. Loose-fitting cotton work pants and shirt were my choice of attire, although many prefer hiking shorts for warm weather trekking. (I like to minimize the target area for black flies while protecting myself from brambles.) It is important to dress in easily removable layers as the temperature may vary widely between noon and dusk, between 1000 and 4000 feet. For spring and fall hiking in Maine, I like a couple of flannel shirts and a nylon windbreaker which offers some protection from rain.

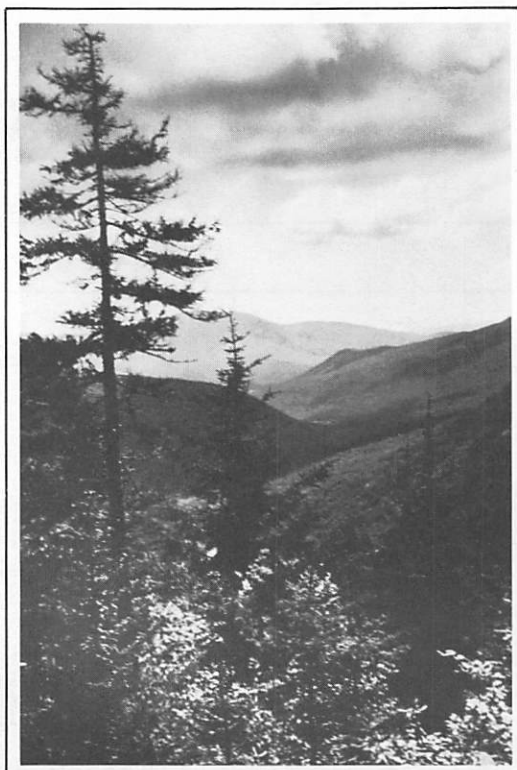
Besides lunch and some high calorie snacks, drinking water and an extra pair of socks, it is prudent to carry a few survival items in your pack even though you only plan a day hike of six or eight hours. These should include a small first-aid kit with "moleskin" for foot repair, waterproof matches, a candle or other firestarter, a jack-knife, extra high calorie food such as chocolate and nuts, a needle and strong thread, an emergency ground cover such as a poncho or space blanket, and most importantly a compass and map of the area in which you will be travelling so that you won't need the other items. A wrong turn from even a well-marked trail can be *upsetting*, especially in the fog or clouds. When uncertain, check your compass frequently and backtrack to the known trail before proceeding more than a couple hundred yards.

The U.S. Geological Survey map of the Old Speck quadrangle will give you some basic orientation to the area. However, it is out of date and the old fire tower trail on it is poorly marked, steep, and hazardous due to loose rock or scree. It is not the desirable route up Old Speck. A better map is included in the *Appalachian Mountain Club Guide to Maine* and the Appalachian trail crosses near the summit of Old Speck eleven miles after entering Maine from New Hampshire.

It is, however, a 20-mile, 3-day hike to the summit of Old Speck from U.S. Rt. 2 in Shelbourne, N.H. This is some of the most difficult walking anywhere on the 2000-mile Appalachian trail which reaches from Springer Mountain, Georgia to Maine's Mount Katahdin. We elected to take a shorter route—four miles, from Maine's Grafton Notch State Park where the Appalachian trail intersects Rt. 26 north of Newry. There is a well-maintained parking lot at this juncture about a mile north of Mother Walker Falls.

After a supper of native brook trout yielded by a small stream and dandelion greens foraged from the edge of a pasture, we had a good night's rest and arose to a damp but clear and cool spring morning. Our gear in good order, we had a breakfast of hot tea and scrambled eggs prepared at the Mother Walker Falls picnic area; then we parked at the base of Old Speck trail to start our climb.

Following the familiar white AMC trail blazes, we started a leisurely walk through damp green hardwood.

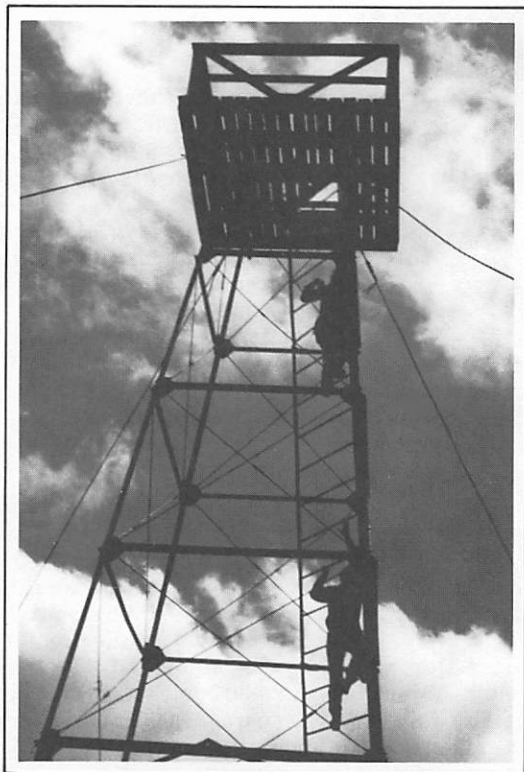


*Looking north from a rest-stop near the eyebrow trail.*

*The author rests alongside Cascade Brook which follows the trail for some distance.*

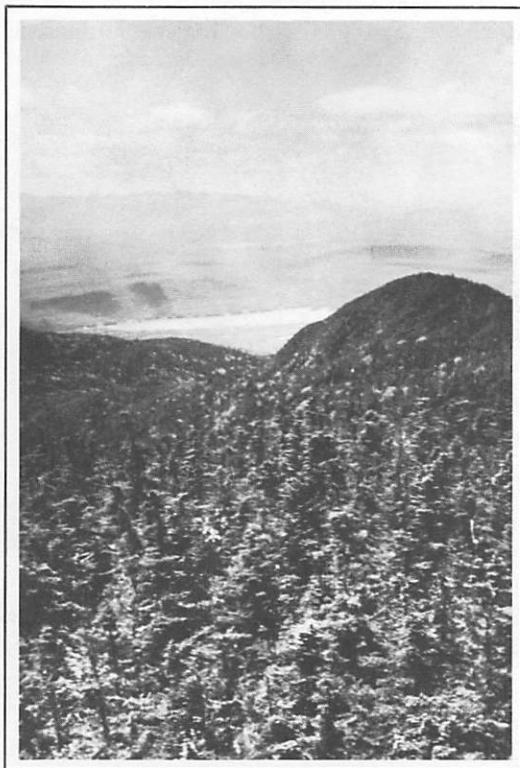






*Climbing the firetower on Old Speck*

*Speck Pond as seen from the fire tower atop Old Speck.*



It seemed that this was going to be an easy walk. Less than a half mile up the trail, however, we removed a layer of clothing and our conversation became intermittent as breathing became labored. The trail was now a series of steep switchbacks through steamy woods as we ascended over 600 feet in elevation in the next half mile. After the trail twisted east, seemingly backwards, and then north on another long switchback, we intersected the Eyebrow trail.

This trail leads to spectacular views of Grafton Notch from the Eyebrow Ledges and follows a northerly route back to the Rt. 26 parking lot. This circuit, blazed with orange markers, makes a nice walk in itself and ample exercise for the average family outing. We chose to go on.

Less than a half mile further, and nearly 700 feet higher, I wondered at the wisdom of our decision. All excess clothing either stowed in our day packs or tied around our waists, we were soon granted a reprieve from this steep climbing as the trail leveled and provided views of the valley below us. Questions of our sanity were put aside when at this rest stop with its breathtaking vista we were overtaken by a young lady carrying a backpack filled with 40 pounds of rocks. She cordially explained that she was training for an ascent up California's Mt. Whitney, the highest peak in the contiguous 48 states, and that the Mahoosucs were an ideal training ground. Indeed.

The next mile or so was a relatively easy walk up and down through softwood forest with occasional dips in the well-worn trail leading through alders on a muddy track. The final climb—and it is literally a climb requiring both hands free to assist through rugged ledges—finds you at the summit and four hours removed from civilization. Here quartz-filled ledges sprout dwarf pines which made useful wind-break. We shared our lunch with Canada Jays, or “camp fools” as they are often called because of their tameness. After a rest I decided to make one more climb.

Somewhat apprehensively, I approached the fire tower that tops the peak of Old Speck. Hand over hand, and without looking down, I made my way to the observation platform which rises well above the summit's trees. The panorama was worth the climb. To the south I could look down into Mahoosuc Notch, over 3000 feet below. Looking north I could see Baldpate and beyond it the mountains of the Rangeley area, including Saddleback. Numerous other peaks filled the view to the east.

The most enticing view, however, was to the west. Here, nestled in a small mountain valley at an elevation of 3500 feet is Speck Pond. This alpine lake, or tarn, is Maine's highest body of water. I wondered as I looked what possibilities that blue jewel would provide for my flyrod. But wonder was all that time allowed. With the sun moving further west in the spring sky, we made a two hour hike back to the base of the mountain just as the sun passed behind the slope we had descended. Tired, and with some lingering thoughts about Old Speck, we were happy to have made it UP OLD SPECK.

---

*Johnson, a Biddeford-based photojournalist, took our cover photo this month. Watch for another article by him, titled “Maine's Road Through The White Mountains” in a fall issue of BitterSweet.*



(Left) In these towered rooms of his house at the corner of Court and Goff Streets in Auburn, Holman Day wrote his first novel, *Squire Phin*. The success of his three books of poetry about Maine people, his numerous essays and novels, led him to try film-making and scenario writing in Hollywood.

While Day travelled around the state he kept a notebook handy in which he jotted down incidents, phrases, and scenes. He often dressed things up to emphasize a point, and never denied it. His potential appeared unlimited.

He married Helen R. Gerald, daughter of A. F. Gerald, the electric car tycoon of Maine. Her father had built for them the handsome Victorian house in Auburn at the corner of Court and Goff Streets. They had one daughter, Dorothy.

After the death of his first wife, he married Agnes Bearce Nevens, an artistic lady who was Superintendent of the Maine State Art Exhibition for several years.

At the very peak of his success in Lewiston, Day got restless. In 1897 he resigned from the Lewiston paper and joined the staff of the *Bangor Commercial*, also serving as the Eastern Maine Correspondent, which paid as much as \$200 a month.

The money was good, but how he hated to leave a good piece of folk writing to track down a news item! He was never a news-getter, but just give him the facts and he'd put together a

yarn to make one laugh or cry.

"He found that there was so much fun to life that work was sometimes secondary," said Editor Staples. "As a result he was easily diverted from the task at hand."

Holman Day became restless again and returned to Lewiston-Auburn as Managing Editor of the *Lewiston Daily Sun*. It was soon evident that he was misplaced and was transferred to the *Lewiston Evening Journal*.

His daily column, "Up In Maine," was a great hit. He turned out poems by the bushels. They reflected New England obstinacy, tolerance of the unconventional, self-reliance, quiet courage in adversity, and dry humor. Children memorized his verses at

school. They were recited at Grange meetings and church socials. Editor Staples always claimed that had Day stuck to them he would have ranked with James Whitcomb Riley.

In 1900 a collection of these verses was published. The first edition of 2,000 copies soon sold out. Within ten years, 30,000 copies were bought and mailed or carried by Maine folks all over the country.

Day wrote rapidly, accurately, and culturally. He wasn't deceived about the literary excellence of his verses. He knew they were just jingles and he wrote them for his friends, the common folks of Maine.

Two years later his second book of verses, *Pine Tree Ballads*, showed

(Right) This 1892 picture included Holman Day, seated at the left; his partner Edwin Bunker, seated at the right; and the staff of the *Dexter Gazette*. Day was never comfortable with organizational responsibilities but he loved writing about colorful Maine characters.





technical improvement. His last book of verses, *Kin O Ktaadn*, has prose introductions.

By the time that book hit the market in 1904, he had been restless again and was working for the *Boston Journal*. Then he rediscovered his aversion to city life and came back once more to the *Lewiston Evening Journal*.

He had sold some short stories to *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Harper's*, *The Youth's Companion*, and other magazines. Shortly after, he again resigned from the *Journal*; and this time he dunned up in his Auburn home and wrote his first novel: *Squire Phin*, about a small town lawyer. He discovered that it was much more demanding to turn out a full-length book than it was to dash off one of his brisk essays.

While writing his second book, *King Spruce*, he was so easily diverted that

his wife and a representative from the publishing company stood over him to see that he made his deadline.

When *King Spruce* was published, the *New York Times* hailed it as "a new phase of American romance. For the first time a Down East author made the Maine lumber industry the background for a major novel."

It was rated as one of Day's finest. He finally wrote about thirteen other books.

In 1921 Day tried playwriting. He formed his own film company in Augusta with two partners.

They produced *The Rider of the King Log*. Its first showing, at the Empire Theatre in Lewiston, was a great success. But the rest of the country didn't endorse it and Day lost his savings in the venture.

Then he went to Hollywood, where he wrote *Clothes Make The Pirate*, starring Dorothy Gish and Leon

Erroll. *King Spruce* was also filmed out there. He was a scenario writer for three years, but he learned that in the film-making industry the author is the least important person.

He wrote a letter back to Maine: "The tough feature here is that there are so few rainy days when one can sit in the barn doorway and gossip with the neighbors while you whittle."

His next venture was to conduct a series of radio programs in San Francisco. He played the role of a Down East sea captain dispensing Yankee wit and wisdom.

His last years were very lonely. Financial problems, ill health, and homesickness for Maine drained the joy from his life. By the time he died (Feb. 19, 1935), a new generation of Maine readers had grown up that scarcely knew his name.

*Labbie is a Lewiston correspondent.*

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# Folk Tale



## A TRIBUTE TO PAPA WALTER MAXIM

Some years ago Papa was left with two small children; the older a boy, the younger a girl. For a period of time the children were boarded with loving next-door neighbors. Then an elderly lady they called "Grammie" came to keep house, and the family was together again.

For the approximately two years the family and the housekeeper lived in Sarasota, Florida, not too much is remembered. Except—on one of the little girl's birthdays an object appeared behind Papa's bed with a sheet covering it. To her surprise a little rocking chair came forth which has been treasured over the years and has brought much happiness to many a wee one. The boy began his school days there and Papa built a small house.

It was soon decided to return to Maine. Not long after arriving here, Grammie decided she didn't want to stay any longer, so Papa answered an ad in the newspaper for another housekeeper. She eventually became the new mother and three sisters and two brothers were added to the family.

When the girl became older and went to school, she could always tell when Papa had been to town for supplies because he would draw sketches on the snowbanks with the horsewhip while Old Nell stopped to rest.

Also when she rode with him she got to hold the reins and Papa said Nell could always tell when a child held the reins; then the horse was more gentle. She would twitch her ears back and forth to catch any noises. The girl got to lead her for cultivating the crops. One day Papa had to go to the house for something and the girl lay down on the grass beside the horse to watch the clouds. When Papa came back he told her not to lie so close to the horse again, for something might frighten her and she might whirl and step on the girl lying there. The girl loved the horse, was not afraid, and just never thought of that.

Papa had a strange pet once. He was in the cow pasture and spotted a large porcupine. After he killed her, he thought she looked rather full, so he performed an operation. The little one was ready for this world, so was very much alive. He brought it home in his handkerchief and had it for a pet for four years. He liked animals, especially wild ones. He knew a lot about their habits and how to handle them.

Papa helped his oldest son to build a wooden car—one that would really steer! The boy pushed that for hours and many miles, making a motor sound with his mouth. If anyone else got a ride on it they felt like royalty. Papa also made a fast-travelling double-runner. What fun we had on that!

When Papa brought in the milk for separating, the little girls ran for their dippers and a drink of warm milk. He saw to it that they had their share of animals to play with. He got some ducks once and they were having such fun splashing and swimming about that one of the girls said, "Next time, I'm going to be a duck." Another was very unhappy because she couldn't have a little lamb monument seen in a small cemetery nearby. Papa got a real lamb which took care of that situation.

Well, the family grew up; gave him many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

During his retirement years he enjoyed having time for his garden. You couldn't find straighter rows anywhere in the world. Papa was proud of his garden and of the produce he could share with his family.

Page 30...



# THE HOUSE THAT CRIED

*Fiction by Kate Mayer*

"That house you like is still for sale."

He said the same thing every time they came along this road. They had been taking this route to the lake cottage for several years, and more often since their kids had grown up and moved away.

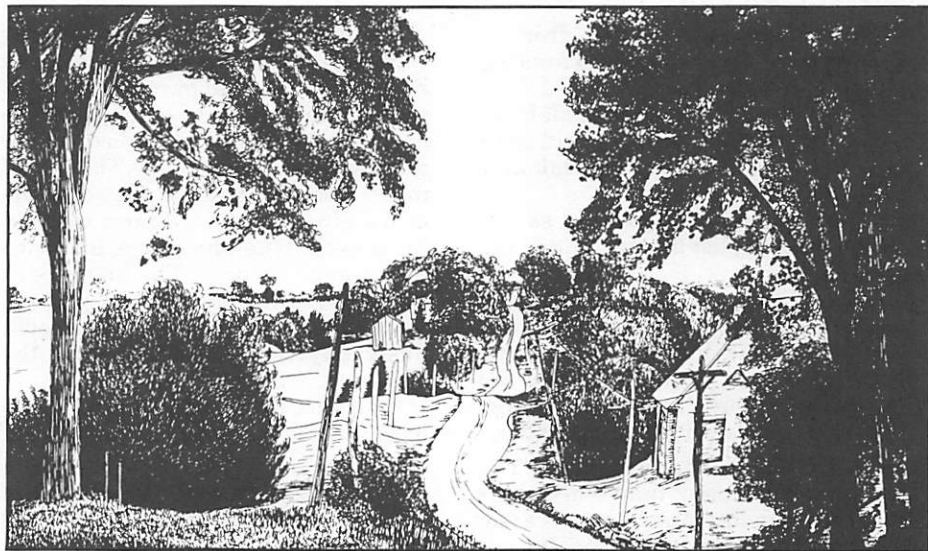
Sometimes they came this way early on Saturday morning and they saw the old house with the morning sun reflected in the sidelights of its colonial doorway. Also reflecting the early sun, the brass rooster on the weather-vane atop the ancient barn did not need to crow to attract attention. If they left home after work on Friday evening, they were apt to pass the empty house just as the sun was going down, and the clump of white pines behind it cast long shadows across the meadow. The gold of the sun's rays reminded the weathered clapboards that they had once been painted white.

Each time they passed the house, one of them made some comment about it. She had never actually said she liked the place. She varied her remarks with the time of day. In the morning she would say, "Whoever built that house was wise to have set it at that angle to the road. The kitchen windows in the ell get the morning sun. It's much easier to get going in the morning if you have a sunny kitchen."

If it was late in the day as they passed, she would say, "There must be a magnificent view from the upstairs windows. I'll bet you can see over that stand of pine and all the way to the pond. That would be a peaceful way to end each day if you could stand in your own bedroom and watch the sun set on such a pretty view, wouldn't it?"

He rarely commented on her conversations. He had the radio playing whenever he was driving and years ago he had ceased to listen to her daydreaming.

This day they were headed home to Massachusetts. It had been a lovely weekend at the cottage. The warm sun of late spring belied the wet weather forecast, but he did not want to chance having to drive the turn-



*Illustration by Betsy Hanscom of South Windham*

pike at night in the rain. They had closed up the cottage soon after lunch, and now it was just a little after 3:00 on a Sunday afternoon when they came to the sign reading, "Welcome to Limerick." From that direction the old house came into view as the road rounded a curve. It nestled comfortably on a little half-acre shelf halfway up a long hill. The meadow grass between the front door and the road was a low matted variety that gave a false impression of care for the property at first glance. Its real abandonment showed in the faded, weather-worn FOR SALE sign drooping slightly as it hung from its post.

They were early. Rain in Boston meant there would be no baseball game on t.v. He just might stop if she asked him. Hurriedly, before they were too close, she said, "We've lots of time. Let's pull into the drive and peek into that old house we like. I am so curious about that place."

"Why?" He seemed really surprised. "There's no use in us looking at any property until Sara graduates."

"Oh, I know we're not seriously looking. I mean just for fun. I just wonder why such a pretty little place never sold."

"Probably way overpriced, and besides, not many folks want to live this far out of town. I don't think you can even see another house from here."

She wasn't sure he would stop. She would not have asked again. She smiled when he turned the car into the short lane. There was a beveled fanlight over the front door that she had not noticed before. He stopped the car but did not shut off the engine.

"That sign says 'NO TRESPASSING.'"

"Oh, come on, honey." She opened the car door. "If anyone asks, we could always say we might be interested."

"That's a laugh." He wasn't even smiling. "We'll just about make September tuition without having to borrow again."

She did not hear him. She was already walking up the lane. She went to a window in the ell and put her hands against the dirty glass to cut the glare. She stood peeking into the kitchen as he walked past her toward the front of the building.

"Come look," she said excitedly, "There's furniture in here."

"This place is falling down." He was scowling.

"This place is even older than I thought." She moved to another kitchen window. "Look, there's a wall oven in the fireplace and it has a cast iron door."

"The whole frame is loose around the front door. See here; it has actually pulled away from the house. This sill looks rotten, too."

He kicked the sill.

She walked around to the front of the building and looked into another window.

"From here that drop-leaf table looks like curly maple. I wish I could see a little better. That looks like a valuable antique."

"Huh—nobody else thought so."

She walked past him around to the west side.

"It really is sad," she said. "It looks as if the people who lived here just walked out one day and never came back. See that blue shawl on the daybed, and there's a man's coat hanging from those wall pegs by the door."

"Yeah." He spoke more gently. "The old gent who used that wheelchair just died one day and nobody cared. That's an old wheelchair, too. It's got a cane back seat. 'Think it's oak.'"

Now she was looking in one window of the front room, he in another.

"Funny someone would brick up a fireplace like that, isn't it? I guess that hole was for a stove pipe. I wonder why the stove is gone and nothing else?"

He shook his head. "All questions and no answers," he mumbled. He kicked the corner of the building where the frame met the fieldstone foundation. "That stove pipe hole means there's no heat in this place. No wonder it didn't sell; it would cost a fortune to fix it up. Just not worth it, that's all."

He kicked again. "See? I told you. Dry rot!"

She walked around back without replying. She had to stand on an old bucket to see in the back windows. There was trash everywhere on the floor of the back room. Plainly vandals had been there, and that long ago. In one corner the contents of an old desk appeared to have been dumped onto the floor. Piles of papers lay scattered over a worn rag rug. Her imagination began to stir . . . letters, journals, who knew what?

Her voice carefully masked her enthusiasm. She said, matter-of-factly, "Let's go inside."

"Are you crazy? Look right here. The bulkhead has rotted away. The cellar's wide open. There's no telling what was holed-up down there for the winter." He continued, "The floors may not be safe. Just face facts: this place is shot!"

She did not push the issue. "Let's walk out to the stone wall and look across the valley," she said.

His words trailed off for she had not waited for his answer. She was already nearly up to the old barn and headed toward the wall. As he came up beside her, the view that stretched before them was quietly lovely. They stood in silence for a minute or two as the peacefulness of the old farm reached them both. When he spoke, his voice was almost tender. "The house isn't worth anything at all, but you are right about the setting. A person could likely buy the whole thing for the value of the land."

He shook his head and said, "The barn's worse than the house—no good at all."

Her reply was a wistful one. "It's easy to see why someone picked this spot for their home."

He slipped his arm around her

shoulders. "Yes," he said, "it is a good location."

They were walking back toward the old house when the weather made a firm decision. A dark shadow enveloped the valley and distant thunder disturbed their reverie.

"Best bet for this old place would be a bolt of lightning and a fast fire." Then he said, "Oh hell, we're going to get wet before we can get to the car."

The spring shower was beginning in earnest as they hurried past the front door. He saw big raindrops streaking the soil on the window panes.

She saw tears.

She entered the car in silence. He started the engine and pulled into the road. They would still get home before dark. He didn't have to look at her to know that she was crying soundlessly. He had no idea why, but he squeezed her hand as she took the handkerchief he offered. He loved her dearly, even though she wasn't always practical. He loved her just the way she was.

No one said a word except the radio.

*Kate Mayer lives in Danvers, Mass.*

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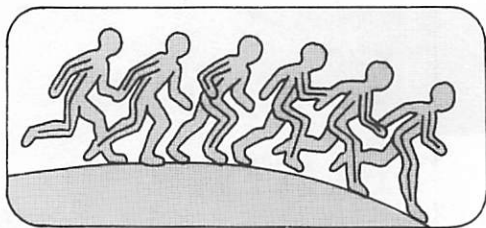


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# Medicine For The Hills

by

Michael A. Lacombe, M.D.

## HEADACHE—

### Not Just A Pain In The Neck

In the next several months we shall consider the important and troubling symptom of headache. Although the most commonly encountered type of headache is that associated with anxiety and emotional tension, all headaches cannot be attributed to this cause and need not be tolerated as such, as especially when effective forms of therapy are available.

In this and in subsequent articles we shall consider why headaches occur and what exactly is hurting, other diseases which have headache as their manifest symptom, location, signs, and symptoms which may help in the diagnosis of the cause of a headache, and some forms of therapy available for headache.

In general, headaches may arise from the stimulation of structures within the skull (intracranial structures), or from stimulation of tissues which lie on the outside of, or adjacent to, the skull.

All of the tissues which cover the skull are more or less sensitive to pain, but the arteries supplying these coverings of the brain (the meninges) are especially pain-sensitive. Surprisingly, the skull itself and the brain itself are not sensitive to pain. Accordingly, headache arising from structures within the skull chiefly comes from a traction or pulling upon pain-sensitive veins, arteries, and cranial nerves; or from displacement or inflammation of these structures. Such headache is usually referred pain which is felt elsewhere on the head, much the same as heart pain is often referred to the arm or jaw. Thus, the pain from a brain tumor may be felt as a local tenderness of the scalp.

Headache can result from changes in the cerebrospinal fluid pressure; these changes in pressure can result in traction upon, or displacement of, the arteries, veins, and nerves within the skull and give rise to the headache. Low spinal fluid pressure may result from a spinal tap (lumbar

puncture). Such post-puncture headaches are often a complication of spinal taps. High spinal fluid pressure may result from a number of causes, but the most worrisome cause is brain tumor.

Headache from a brain tumor is a deep, steady, dull type of headache. It is very seldom of the throbbing kind. It usually comes and goes but may occasionally be continuous. It is *not* the most severe type of headache; migraine is usually more intense, and the headache associated with a ruptured blood vessel or meningitis is always more severe. Brain tumor headaches may be made better with aspirin or other pain medicine and do not usually interfere with sleeping. Brain tumor headaches may be aggravated by coughing or by straining at stool and are sometimes made worse by assuming the erect position and made better by lying down. Vomiting with a brain tumor headache is not common unless the headache is especially severe.

As mentioned above, headache from a brain tumor is produced by traction upon and by displacement (or pushing aside) of the pain-sensitive structures within the skull, chiefly the large arteries, veins, and some of the nerves within the skull. Usually the headache is felt directly over the tumor. In addition, brain tumor will sometimes cause subtle personality changes as well as the type of headache described—changes often noticed more by the family than by the patient. In patients who have never had headaches, a severe and persistent headache should always raise the possibility of a brain tumor. In patients who have had a long history of headaches, changes in location, intensity, and quality of the headache should also suggest the same diagnosis.

Meningitis, which was discussed in the last two issues of *BitterSweet*, produces a different kind of headache. The infection and inflammatory changes in the covering tissues of the brain lower the pain threshold

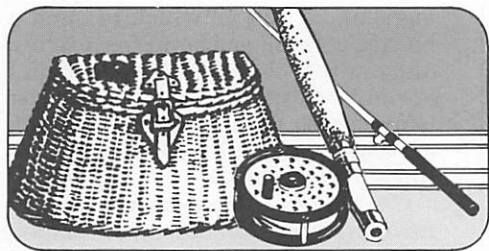
of these tissues. The tissues—the meninges—therefore become more sensitive to traction and to displacement so that pain can be produced even with slight motion of the head, as well as with the normal pulsating of the blood vessels in the meninges. Therefore, the headache of meningitis is characteristically a throbbing, pulsating headache in contradistinction to the headache of brain tumor. As will be remembered from previous articles, headache is but one of a triad of symptoms in meningitis, occurring together with fever and stiff neck.

The temporal arteritis/polymyalgia rheumatica syndrome has also been discussed in these columns before, in the articles on arthritis. This disease features pain and soreness in the muscles of the limbs, and especially in the proximal muscles—those groups of muscles in the limbs closest to the trunk, i.e. the upper arms and upper legs. The disease is exceedingly rare under the age of sixty and is frequently associated with inflammation of certain of the extracranial and intracranial blood vessels, especially the temporal arteries. It may be remembered that this type of “rheumatism” may result in sudden blindness if undiagnosed, because of inflammation of the arteries supplying the retina. The temporal arteries are those pulsating blood vessels which can be felt at the temples. Headache from temporal arteritis, when it occurs, with or without polymyalgia rheumatica, tends to be quite severe and pulsating in nature. It is a persistent rather than intermittent type of headache and is usually associated with tenderness of the temporal arteries. This last feature may cause patient or doctor to attribute the headache to migraine, since migraine will often produce tenderness at the temples as well.

Headaches from these three serious diseases—brain tumor, meningitis, and temporal arteritis—have in common a high degree of severity. Brain tumor headache is not a throbbing kind of headache, whereas headache from meningitis and temporal arteritis are so; the latter two diseases are associated with other signs and symptoms which should suggest the diagnosis.

**Next month: Migraine and  
Other Vascular Headaches**





## At The Cottage

by Carol Gestwicki

### A-BERRYING WE WILL GO

I really knew I had made a friend the first time someone from the lake invited me to go picking berries with them. You have to know how seriously people in Maine take their favorite berry spots in order to understand this was no casual invitation. Why, I've heard rumors that some families wait to make sure the marriage is going to last before revealing their secret spots to those who marry into the family! In any case, I was delighted to be asked to go, little dreaming that this was the start of a summer obsession.

I don't think they'd actually had serious second thoughts by the time I met them early next morning, and they didn't actually blindfold me, but I'd swear we took several unnecessary and confusing turns. By the comments made about rough terrain and the dangers of going alone to pick, I quickly surmised that I was not to come back to this special spot unless invited along.

The first day I discovered several truths about berrying. It is hard and rigorous work. Unless you actually enjoy climbing up steep slopes, holding on to prickly bushes with one hand while stretching for distant berries with the other, standing on fallen logs which often break through, fighting off bugs, and worrying about what is making that rustling sound underfoot, I suggest stopping at the nearest roadside stand for your berries. But, if the idea of living off the riches of the land appeals to you, and a little adventure thrown in just adds spice, I suggest keeping your eyes open to find some secret spots of your own.

There is a definite relationship between areas that have been cleared out by logging and the appearance of berry bushes—notably blackberry and raspberry. It will be some years, though, before the bushes bear fruit, so it takes patience and a good memory to keep checking. Then there'll be a number of good years, followed by the

decline of berries, so it behooves an interested berry picker to keep a sharp outlook for both logging operations and berry bushes. I've trained my kids carefully not to shriek when they see berry patches while out hiking with their friends, but to ignore them coolly, divert attention if necessary, and mentally mark a treasure map with an X.

It is also important to become calendar-wise about when to hit the patches, or someone else will certainly get there before you do. It does no good to remember vaguely that raspberries get ripe sometime in July; if you're not out there by July 21st you might as well wait until next year. Of course, there are the unforeseens that throw the calendar calculations off. One was the kind of snowless winter we've had lately—the lack of snow cover made for lots of dead bushes and disappointing trips to the berry patch. Another unpredictable is the arrival date of the families of the most intrepid pickers. After they're here, the berry season is virtually finished, for they all have sharp eyes, long memories, large appetites . . . and are never seen anywhere without a bucket.

Berry pickers have been known to go to extremes to protect their interests. Nobody outright lies, but mild deceptions abound. I have one friend who always takes her young son with her. He never picks a berry, just sits by the side of the road, but if a car happens to drive near where she's picking, she drops her bucket and bends over him solicitously, as if checking a scraped knee. I know another who carries a paperback book in her back pocket. When someone comes near, she lolls casually against the nearest tree, bucket behind her, for all the world intent on the book—never mind that no one is fooled one minute by the sight of someone in a berry-stained shirt reading in such an odd spot. Even friendship means little when it comes to safeguarding the berries. I once heard one neighbor at a

gathering inquire of several others whether there was any way to approach a high-bush blueberry area by car. There was a short silence while people looked at one another. Finally, one answered, "Well, yes, there is . . . but we won't tell you how!"

Conversations about berries tend to be the vaguest and most noncommittal conversations you've ever heard.

"Have you checked for blueberries yet?"

"I really don't think it's going to be much of a year,"—meant to discourage others from even looking.

"Did you get enough berries for a pie?"

"Oh, I really don't know what I'll do with them"—smart move, this. Everybody knows a pie takes four cups, and if you got that many last time out, you'll certainly bear watching to see which direction you're heading. Berry pickers are the only species I know who notoriously underrate their accomplishments.

---

**Mild deceptions abound to protect the secrecy of the berry patch. I know someone who carries a paperback book in her back pocket. When someone comes near, she lolls casually against the nearest tree, bucket behind her, for all the world intent on the book.**

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"How did you do?"

"Oh, I suppose I got a cup"—a statement that probably means five times as much.

One other aspect of berry picking which also serves as a clue for sharp-eyed neighbors is the costume adopted by each picker. Every berry picker I know has a distinctive outfit, and when those clothes appear, no one is deceived about the person's destination and purpose. For one thing, only a novice would go into a berry patch in anything but a long-sleeved shirt and jeans, the better to withstand the tears of the bushes. And, once they've been worn a few times for berrying, the clothes are usually stained and ripped beyond any other use. So I am positive when I see a neighbor emerge on a hot July afternoon in her well-known long-sleeved blue checkered shirt that I had better get going before the berries are all gone. The other two essentials in the uniform are a large hat—presumably to slow down the

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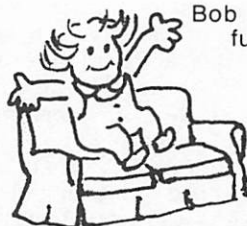


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bugs; and a belt on which to hang a bucket, leaving one hand free to cling and one to pick. The saddest person I ever saw was one who had not yet learned this trick, and who lost balance and saw an hour's picking rolling down the hill.

Oh, there's a lot we berry pickers have to endure, for sure, from endangering skin and limb, dodging other pickers, and sweating in a hot patch on a summer afternoon. But for anyone who has tasted a fresh berry pie, warm from the oven, there's no decision to make about whether it's worth it all. Come to think of it, I think I'll have time before supper to check if that patch on the side of the mountain is doing anything yet.

*Mrs. Gestwicki stays in her cottage in North Waterford during the summer months.*



*Drawing by Jo Lantz, South Paris*

#### ... Page 24 Folk Tale

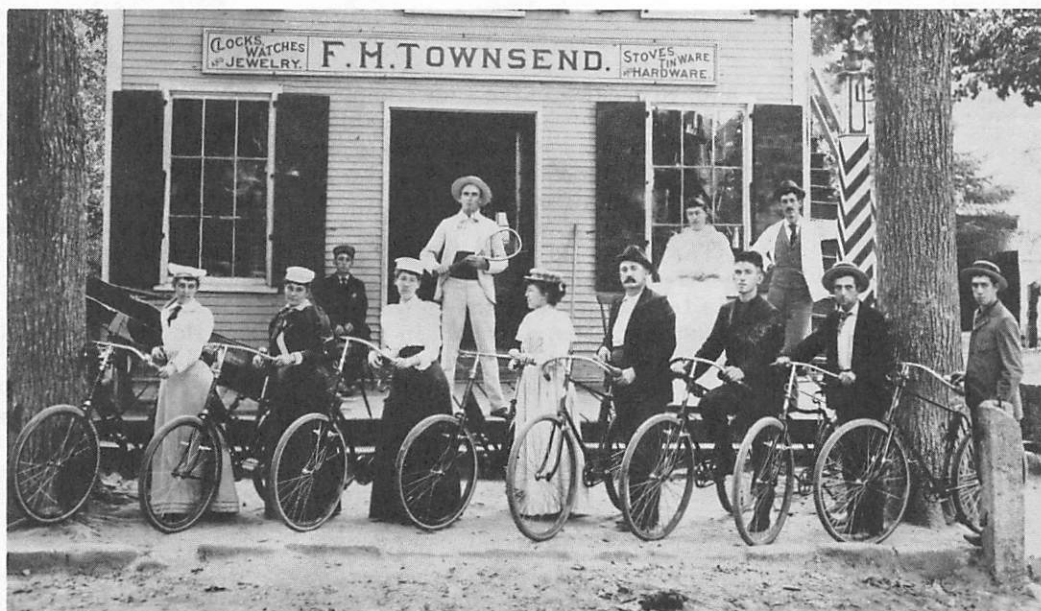
It was in his garden that the life of Walter E. Maxim ended on July 9, 1980. We all miss him greatly, but he gave so much for all of us to remember. I know because I am his oldest daughter.

He always enjoyed **BitterSweet** and I expect some of you enjoyed his writing and the pictures my grandmother (Nettie Cummings Maxim) left her family to enjoy.

*Thelma Maxim Holden  
Waterford*



## Recollections:



*The Limerick Bicycle Club—photo from New England Past, edited by Jaen Sugden, Harry N. Abrams, Inc.*

# *The Wonderful Days of the Bicycle Craze*

*by Allison Williams*

*Earn a bicycle. To introduce our teas, spices, and baking powder, sell 75 pounds and we will give you a safety bicycle. W. G. Baker, Springfield, Mass.*

In the spring of 1895 this ad appeared in newspapers throughout New England. The bicycle craze was in full swing, and numerous product companies were taking advantage of the yen for "wheels," as they were called. Even the younger set was getting involved. The Atlantic Tea Company of Brockton, Mass. would "give a fine tricycle" to any little girl who sold 35 pounds of tea.

First payment on a High Grade Acme Bicycle was being offered to youngsters willing to distribute Acme's advertisements. However, those who applied had to be well recommended.

Walter Came, a boarding student at Thornton Academy in Saco, had a better idea. He would become an agent, cashing in on the bicycle fad by selling the wheels to his friends and classmates.

"Feb. 21, 1895. Got excused from school at 11:15; went down to the

house; changed my clothes, ate dinner and caught the 11:45 train. Stayed in Portland all the p.m. looking over bicycles. The '95 Victors are good-looking wheels. Also saw the Rambler, Keating, Remington, Union, Waverly, and Wolf. Came home on the 5:45 train."

Home was the village of Alfred. Five miles beyond Alfred, Sanford was doing a thriving business in bicycles. Walter noted in his diary that Sanford had 14 bicycle agencies.

He received his first order from a friend, Garnsey Getchell. He made a \$15 commission on it, then traded his commission plus his old bike for a new Victor. Several weeks later he sold a Rambler, and ordered a Victoria for his sister Grace. Then he sold another Rambler, but had to collect \$10 a month to pay for it. However, business was picking up. Everyone wanted bicycles.

When his new wheel arrived, he wrote, "It is a beauty with high frame, 1 and 5/8 inch tires and ram's horn handlebars. Rode it down to the depot. Got covered with mud."

That was in mid-April. The long, muddy road between Saco and Alfred would seem to have had little enticement for anyone, let alone a cyclist. But Walter frequently pedaled the 16 miles home on week-ends, returning to school on Monday mornings.

"April 29. Came down here on my bicycle in a.m. before school. The ride was very bad but I took it easy and did not get tired."

Teen-age Walter was an excellent cyclist, able to cover the distance from school to home in an hour and a half. His diary entries include information on some record-breaking trips. One July day, on a dry (dirt) road with the wind at his back, he covered the 13 miles to Biddeford in 42 minutes, and noted it was "a record for the distance."

Enthusiastic wheelmen were forming clubs in the larger communities, and there were numerous races at local tracks. But bicycles also had their detractors. The *Sanford Advocate* of Sept. 5, 1895, states that "On Saturday of last week a large quantity of tacks was found . . . scattered along the race course."



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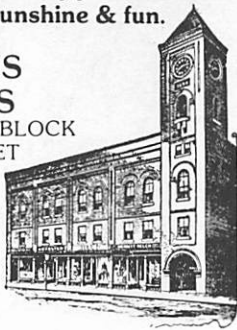
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Who had performed the dastardly deed? The newspaper was vehement in its condemnation of the "persons so narrow-minded and contemptibly mean" as to spoil a race in this manner.

"The horsemen were the first to be blamed because of the known opposition of some of them to cycle racing." "But," asks the *Advocate*, "Can you think of a horseman in Sanford who would be guilty of such a low, mean, contemptible trick?"

The guilty party apparently was never apprehended, because neither Walter's diary nor the newspaper mentions any arrests. But in reporting another anti-cyclist event, the *Advocate* fully described and identified the villain.

It was a "vicious horse," who, when it saw Louis N. Goodall taking a spin in the village of Springvale, decided that here was an opportunity to take vengeance on all bicycles and in particular on Goodall's.

When he saw the horse bearing down on him, Goodall quickly pedaled to the other side of the road. But the horse went right for him. Goodall was left with "a badly bruised hip, scalp wound, and a scratch on the calve (*sic*) of his right leg." The bicycle, a Stearns Special, "was a total wreck and has gone to the factory for repairs," reported the *Advocate*.

Walter was luckier than Louis Goodall. He managed to avoid mean horses—and, between wrestling, playing tennis, and flirting with the girls, he continued to practice on his wheel. It paid off. On the Fourth of July, on a Warwick Racer loaned by Leavitt and Co., for whom he had been acting as agent, he won the long-distance cycle race in Sanford. He received "the time prize and \$20."

There were other races coming up and Walter planned to be on hand.

Maybe to win a Swift Action revolver, or Morgan and Wright racing tires, or an elegant plush slumber couch—only a few of the prizes being offered at the Labor Day races.

His dreams of glory received a dismaying jolt when, during a practice high jump on July 29 (he had broken some high jump records at school), he sprained his ankle. He was unable to ride his wheel for several weeks. Not for him the unset diamond, the camel hair sweat blanket, or the 50 Payson Tucker cigars being offered by the League of American Wheelmen at its New England Division Meet.

But he took the train to Springvale to see the "bicycle parade of 325 wheels" when the meet was held. A fancy rocking chair was presented to the visiting club having the most representatives and a plush floor rug to "the visiting club making the finest appearance."

There was some wrangling among officials over the one-mile state championship because no one was able to cover the distance inside the time specified. The disqualified contestants were sulky; the *Advocate* felt the disputes had somewhat spoiled the day. But the splendid appearance of all those wheels (fine prizes being given to the best decorated) served to enhance the reputations of the cyclists.

The ranks of their detractors were thinning. As the *New York World* stated that year, "The bicycle is a democratic machine, a faithful servant, a luxury and a necessity, great and cheap. It is a good doctor, a destroyer of the blues. It deserves the monument which it is building to itself in the shape of a healthier, happier people."

How could its devotees ask for more?

Allison Williams lives in Alfred



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# Places To Go—People To See

## —in western Maine

### The Evolution of A Potter - Fay Corrin of Bryant Pond

by Jane Chandler

Wouldn't everyone you know like to make a living doing what they enjoy doing? Fay Corrin has done just that. She has taken her hobby of pottery and turned it into a full-time job. Fay started in a section of the garage, throwing pots for her own fun and use. She now owns and operates Frieden Dorf Distinctive Creations on Main Street in Bryant Pond.

Fay loves her job. People stop in to visit her and end up watching her throw some clay on the wheel. She is constantly creating something beautiful from a lump of clay. Those skillful hands carefully stretch, mold, pull, and shape the clay into its final form. Fay often sits out front, carving details into her pottery. The pot is fired in a kiln to make it hard. Then it is glazed and fired a second time, giving it the shades of color so striking. Fay invites anyone interested in the process to come in and watch.

Fay Corrin the potter has evolved over the years. She took her first pottery course at the Texas Women's University 17 years ago in 1965. She went on to study art at the Davenport Museum of Art in Iowa. Fay moved to Maine 14 years ago when her husband Denis began working in the area as a psychologist. As their three children grew older (Tanya is now 13, Laren, 11, and Greg, 8), Fay had more time for her basement hobby. She took a few courses at different places—with Garrett Bonnema in Bethel, at the Craft School in Lewiston, the Portland School of Art, Haystack School of Crafts, and the Pineland School of Crafts in North Carolina.

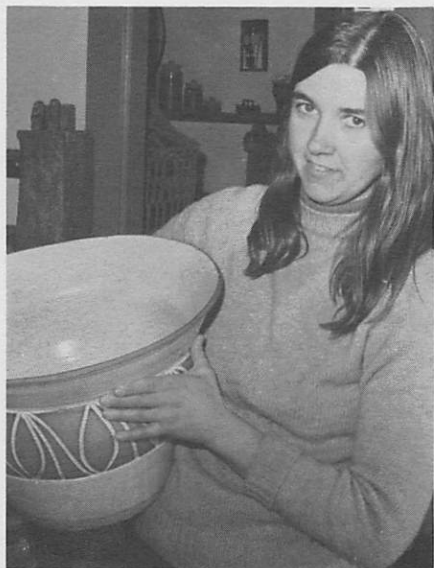
It became obvious to Fay as she began selling her craft at local fairs that the corner of the garage wouldn't do. She expanded into the basement of her house, meanwhile fantasizing

about having her own studio with plenty of room to make and display her wares. In 1979 along with the help of her apprentice, Harry Gorman, Fay built a gorgeous studio and apartment in the woods near her Bryant Pond home. The studio was built in between throwing pots for the fair circuit and filling individual orders which were growing rapidly; and she called it Frieden Dorf—a German word meaning peaceful place or peaceful village. The name certainly fits the Corrin's home and studio on the hill.

The summer of 1981 brought many changes in Fay's growing business. Fay decided to buy an old building on Main St. in Bryant Pond. The entire family spent the summer completely redoing the interior and painting the exterior of the new building. The new Frieden Dorf Distinctive Creations was opened for business in August, 1981. Somehow, Fay brought that peaceful feeling with her when she moved downtown.

Fay is quite an industrious woman, selling wholesale to stores throughout Maine and the Northeast, entering fairs throughout Maine and New England, and retailing her pottery at the shop. Fay has made several special orders for individuals. She finds it very satisfying to have someone describe what they want and to then create something to meet that need. Fay has made the complete set of salt/pepper shakers, small vase, and cream and sugar sets for the Boiler Room Restaurant in Bryant Pond. She has made the communion chalice and plate for the Catholic Churches in Norway, Lewiston, Bridgton, and Biddeford. She has made the awards for the elementary school sports and for two local canoe races. Fay also enjoys carrying hand-made gifts from other Maine craftsmen.





Fay Corrin

"It's a pleasure to see so many neat things in my store, while I'm helping others sell their wares."

To create the stoneware pottery, Fay uses three electric kilns that fire to a temperature of "cone 8." Fay has two electric wheels to throw on. One was converted from a kick wheel two



One of her pieces for the dining tables at The Boiler Room

years ago as her business expanded, and Fay has just purchased a portable electric wheel. She is looking forward to making pottery on her porch in the sunshine this summer. Anyone driving by can see her work being made right on Main Street.

Another part of the talent is the

teaching aspect. Fay has taught pottery courses in adult education at Bethel, Rumford, and Norway for the past five years. She has had four apprentices at different times since 1979. Presently Robin Wiecezia is learning under Fay's skillful eye. Fay has encouraged three different community people to trade work at the studio for time to work on their own projects. By having the studio right in the shop, these people can man the shop and do something at the same time. One of the benefits of her location is for the students at Woodstock Elementary School. Classes have walked to the studio to make things and watch things being made. The students can get a real connection with the art and the business.

It has been quite a year for growth for Fay Corrin. It was a big step purchasing the present building. All along the way her husband, Den, was encouraging her own growth along with the growth of her business. Fay enjoys being a part of downtown Bryant Pond. She is pleased by how busy she is, both with the local people and tourists. She is also glad for a closer connection with the townspeople. And she looks forward to a busy summer ahead.

If you're passing by the area, stop in and find out for yourself what a peaceful place Frieden Dorf really is.

*Jane Chandler is a free-lance writer and photographer living in West Paris with her husband Jim and two children.*

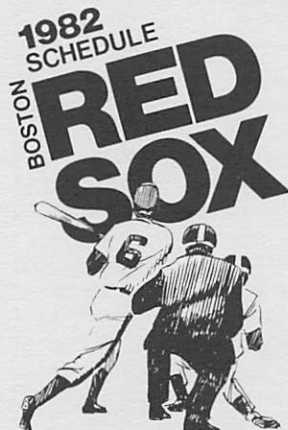
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# Wild Strawberries

by Rebecca Cummings



Aunt Ina has a reputation for being a champion strawberry picker. Whenever she takes to the fields, she almost always comes back with more berries than anyone else. Her technique, however, is any other picker's downfall. My aunt is a talker. Although both hands are furiously busy as she's hunched over a patch of berries, she talks faster than an indignant squirrel can chatter. And not only does she talk, but she also requires frequent responses. I, for one, am handicapped in being able to do only one thing at a time. I can talk. Or I can pick. I can't do both. So it's no wonder when my aunt has full dishes long before anyone else, it appears she's the pickiest picker.

Actually, my mother is the real champion. Only she, already in the lengthening days of snow-covered January, as she sits in her wing-back chair braiding a rug, begins to think of strawberry picking. Oh, she's not thinking of a carefully planned and nurtured garden patch or of picking plum-sized, tasteless, cultivated berries. She's thinking of the end-of-the-finger sized, sun-sweetened, God-given wild strawberries that grow so abundantly in our Maine fields. Wild strawberries are the native Mainer's reward for putting up with months of early fall, long winter, and late spring. They require no special care on anyone's part and are there for the taking.

There is a ritual. In early to mid-June, she goes on her first scouting trip. Perhaps she carries a tin measuring cup, knowing that to take anything larger might be tempting fate. More likely than not, she returns shaking her head and in a voice heavy

with doom says, "There's not enough this year to make going out worthwhile." Too dry last fall. Not enough snow. Too much snow. Late spring frost. Too much rain. There's always something.

A week and a half later, Father is apt to come in with a little birch bark container that he's quickly put together out in the field, abrim with the first of the sweet red berries. "The field above Ottersons' is loaded," he says almost too casually. "You'd better get out there." His eyes twinkle as Mother's apron flies off. It's time!

An impeccable Finnish housekeeper for eleven months of the year, she wouldn't dream of going off for the day in April or October without first washing the dishes, vacuuming the living room rug, scrubbing the kitchen floor, and sweeping up the woodchips in the back shed. She just wouldn't think of it. But in strawberry season no bit of housework is demanding enough, no get-together important enough, no grandchild winsome enough to stand in her way. The woman who would do anything for anyone at any other time of the year is suddenly, fanatically unavailable. She's been known to dash off before eight in the morning with a wild-strawberry picker's gleam in her eye, carrying two or three quart-bowls, and leaving the breakfast dishes soaking in the sink.

She loves it best when fluffy white June clouds laze overhead, when the fields, still wet with morning dew, are alive with wildflowers—yellow dandelion and buttercup, deep purple vetch, pink clover, vermillion Indian

paint brush. Around her, she has one of the most magnificent views in Oxford County. The sloping fields are ringed by Streaked Mountain and the hills of Sumner and Woodstock. If she squints, she can almost make out the steeple of the Baptist Church on Paris Hill. Off in the west are the White Mountains which may still be tipped with snow.

The sun, after the long winter, tingles on her back. Her fingers fly, and the berries fall into the dish. There is a fragrant rush of sweet strawberry smell as they pop off the stems. Summer insects buzz their steady mating songs. An oriole's clear fluted whistle from amongst a stand of white birches along the stone wall makes her smile in contentment.

Before noon she puffs into her kitchen with bowls full. "Oooh . . . you should see it," she sighs. "Such picking. Never have I seen them like this. I start in one place, and they actually wink at me from another! This afternoon, you come, too."

At the end of a strawberry-picking day, it seems that she has surely picked all there are. "That's it!" she says. "That's it for this year." But overnight another round ripens and she finds bountiful picking for another day.

There must be a rite of passage between childhood and adulthood for serious strawberry pickers. Mother often says that she can feel her own mother's presence as she's picking. Her mother is smiling because she remembers when she had to force my mother out into the fields to pick berries. She remembers my grandmother

In strawberry season, no housework is demanding enough, no get-together important enough, no grandchild winsome enough to stand in her way . . . she's been known to dash off before eight in the morning with a wild-strawberry picker's gleam in her eye.

saying in Finnish, "When you get older, you'll find there is no greater pleasure." And when I was a girl of ten or eleven, or maybe even younger, Mother had to threaten me before I'd do my share of the picking for the family. I cried. I stormed. I hated it. I swore that when I grew up, I'd never do it again. But now when June comes around, I calculate my schedule, arranging time for a long visit to the farm during strawberry season. Now that I'm an adult, I, too have been smitten. But when did it happen? When was it that I started to love picking wild strawberries? When did I grow up?

Thus June melts into July. In the distance now are the chug of the tractor and the laughing voices of the haying crew above the thunk-thunk of the baler. Another field will be done by evening.

The best berries grow in the shady protection of the tall, sparse grass of an old hayfield. She has warned the hay makers to keep that tractor away. They mow around her, leaving the strawberry field for last. But she can hear them getting closer; every day bringing them nearer.

Naturally with all the picking going on each day, including an hour or so for Father in the evenings and on Sunday afternoons, there are plenty of berries to be hulled. We never hull in the field; the heat and extra handling would make the berries mushy. And hulling in the fields would take away from the picking time as well. We have found that it's best to get to the berries the same day, though. So in the evenings, when the refrigerator racks sag from over-flowing bowls of bright red berries, we hull. We sit around the huge round oak table, enlisting the help of anyone who walks in, and pick off hulls until our fingers turn black with stain, until our necks

crimp at the nape, until we can't stand up without a slouch. We talk or we listen to the Red Sox. Sometimes we just work in weary silence well into the night.

The berries, that after hulling need no further cleaning, go between fluffy white biscuits under drooping mounds of whipped cream for the tastiest, sweetest shortcakes imaginable. They go between layers of flaky pie crust; into crisp, golden squares; into sinful calorie-laden but oooh-so-good



open-face strawberry pies. They're like sparkling jewels in shiny jars of preserves or jam. And others are quickly boxed to be put in the freezer for a winter treat of strawberries and ice cream. We gorge daily on strawberries, having rich desserts at noon and suppers of cold meat and homemade bread with a bit of shortcake. We feast on true gourmet fare made from one of nature's most perfect gifts.

Careless people sometimes say, "You ought to sell them. You'd get rich."

"Sell them?" Mother scoffs. "I'd never get what they're worth!"

She's right, of course. She could never get enough money to equal the

labor and love involved, but because there is so much of herself in a jar of jam, she often gives it away. She might give it to a brother or a sister, to a favorite niece, to a special friend. She always has a big dish of the choicest berries on hand for her grandchildren to have with their morning cereal or simply to top with milk and a sprinkling of sugar. She may bake a pie for someone home from the hospital or rush a shortcake on a still-warm biscuit to a friend in the nursing home. Or she may give her berries in return for past favors. After I had refinished a complete bedroom set for her, scraping off layer after layer of old paint and stain, rubbing on coat after coat of tung oil into a high-backed bed and two massive bureaus, she told me to help myself to three jars of preserves. I considered myself well recompensed.

Finally the day comes. Sometime after the Fourth, when the hay can wait no longer, the tractor slowly courses through the field, slashing down row upon row of pungent hay and crushing the berries that escaped her nimble fingers. She feels heavy-hearted. The season has ended. Maybe it's just as well, though. We're all a couple of pounds heavier. Our backs are stiff. And frankly, it's getting just too hot.

We stop now and calculate. We picked and hulled perhaps fifty or sixty quarts. Not bad. Not bad at all. It was fun, of course, but that's it for this year.

"By the way," Father mentions, a bit too casually, "if you go up on the knoll, you'll probably find enough blueberries to make up a batch of muffins." And when he looks at us, his eyes twinkle.

*Rebecca Cummings is a Wells writer who grew up on King Hill, South Paris.*

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# Readers' Room:

## MAINE-LY ENGLISH

Ellsworth was born in and still lives in Chicago. I have never held that against him and we have become good friends. On a recent visit, he was accompanied by his granddaughter, a sharp-eyed and intelligent tenth grader.

One day she said to me: "You know you Maine people talk funny. I think you speak English, but you say it funny and some things just don't make sense."

Perhaps fearing that I was offended, Ellsworth hastened to say: "I understand you do some writing. Why don't you do a piece that would be helpful to people from the outlands when they visit Maine for the first time?"

I replied, "Ellsworth, you have sparked an idea. I thank you." So acting on his suggestion, I proceed.

First, one must realize that the letter R has a rough time in Maine. It is a slighted and often ignored letter. Bah Habba is a famous summer resort. Pahk the Cah is what one does when they leave their motor vehicle.

A fur piece is not a mink stole: "How far away is Portland?" "Oh, quite a fur piece."

Our most famous word is "Ayah." It means yes—and only a born Mainer can give it its proper inflection.

We also use some confusing idioms: "How did you get here? I thought your car was busted?"

"Oh, I rode shank's mare." (He walked.)

Then there is Summer Complaint, a form of intestinal disturbance brought on by over-consumption of such dietary items as wild dandelions, fiddlehead greens and kindred Springtime Delicacies. It is also the name applied to certain (and happily very rare) types of summer visitors.

Just suppose a man is late in getting home from "down to the village." His wife might say: "You've been lallygagging around the store again."

"Ayah, I ran into some of the boys and we got to chewing the fat." No collision is involved. It translates:

"Yes, I met some good friends and we engaged in some casual conversation." And, as you may have guessed, lallygagging means loitering.

He might offer: "Old Joe Blow was there and he told me he had caught a sixteen-inch trout, but I think he was pulling my leg." No physical contact—the idiom refers to good natured prevarication or just plain lying.

Now, in case you are invited to enjoy a dinner of Cape Cod Turkey, don't go looking for a drumstick. It is the way we sometimes refer to Salt Codfish, served with white sauce, garnished with slices of hard-boiled eggs and supported by cream-of-tartar biscuits hot from the oven.

It is best not to be drawn into the discussion of politics with a rural Mainer. His convictions are deep-seated and you could "rub him the wrong way" (arouse his ire).

He could come out with something like this: "Mister, you are kicking the wrong dog and I've got a belly full of your gab, and you'd better not darken my door again unless you want a poke in the bread basket."

If his wife is present, she might try to "patch things up"—"Please don't pay him no mind, he is all in a pucker over the way the country is being run."

If her influence should change his attitude, he might say, "Gosh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean nothing by it. Let's bury the hatchet." (an old Indian peace ritual). He could also offer your a glass of orchard tea (an old Maine peace ritual). Orchard tea? Hard cider.

If a man tells you he has too many irons in the fire, don't take him for a blacksmith! He means he is involved in too many different things.

Sometimes a Mainer can get as mad as a wet hen, in which case he may fly off the handle (lose his temper). If he is carrying a chip on his shoulder he is looking for trouble. The reason for that may be because he "got out on the wrong side of the bed this morning."

If he just misses being late for an

appointment, he may say that he made it just by the skin of his teeth (obviously a very narrow margin).

Sometimes a day is spoken of as being "kinda lowery." (Rhymes with showery and means about the same thing.)

However there is one thing that should be well remembered: that while we are inclined to talk in parables, we are also inclined to take what is said all too literally.

Should one chance to ask the stock question, "Do you know what time it is?" the answer could be simply, "yes I do." The comedian's answer to the question, "Have you lived in Brooklyn all your life?" (which is, "no, not yet.") is said to have originated in Maine.

Well this is about the whole ball of wax as Maine talk goes, but at least it gives you a peek into the attic. I don't think it will qualify you to say "Ayah" well enough to fool a native, but perhaps it may help you to understand us better.

And now, if you think I have been pulling your leg, drop in on me some time and we'll chew the fat.

Raymond Cotton  
Hiram

## UNEXPECTED VISITORS

"There's a cow looking in the window," my wife said with a measure of dismay in her voice. I responded by rolling over in bed and mumbling, "It must be Dolly." Dolly was neighbor's horse which had the run of our property whenever she could manage to outwit the flimsy fence he had erected to keep her in. She often wandered up to the house and, being the nosy type, looked in to see what we were up to. Her visits we found amusing, although I did not like the way she chopped up the lawn next to the house.

"It can't be Dolly. It is brown with a white face and has horns."

I had to admit to myself that did not sound like Dolly, who was gray with a white face and did not have horns. Out of bed we jumped to discover that we were surrounded. There were brown

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## DINING OUT

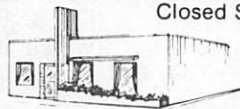
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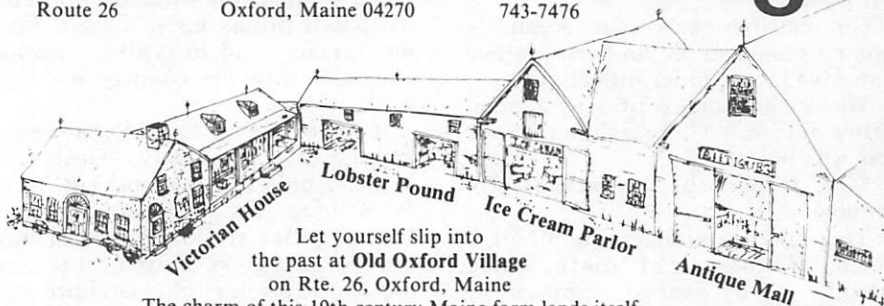
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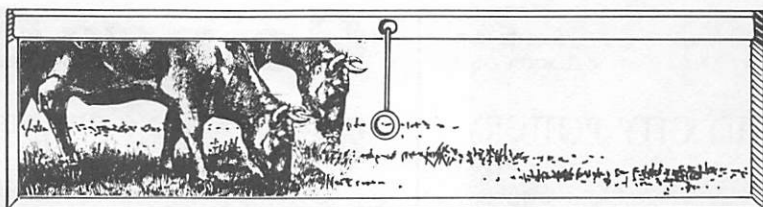
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and white cattle everywhere: in front, below the house, above the house, out back in the orchard.

It was just fortuitous that we immediately realized the origin of the herd, and I have often wondered what we would have thought had we not known. We had been hiking over the mountain on the side of which our farm nestles just a few days before, and had come up against a gate across the road a couple of miles up from our place. Since the road was discontinued, we supposed it did not really matter that someone had taken the liberty. There were several wash outs beyond and no one could drive over to the other side anyway. It was then that we saw a herd of cattle grazing in the fields. It was clear, when they showed up at our place, that someone had left the gate open. Since the road between their field and ours was closed in by woods on both sides, they were not



tempted to stop until they reached us.

It was also clear that we had to devise some stratagem to shoo them back over the mountain. But first, breakfast. It was not a normal breakfast, to say the least. The children could not sit still for long, having to run to the windows to keep an eye on "our cows."

I was in no hurry, myself. This unexpected visit brought what politicians nowadays would call a perfect "photo opportunity." Our friends in the city were always asking what we could possibly find to do during our long summers in Maine. Now I could show them. We still have the pictures in our family album: I, posing with a cow on each arm, the picture of rural prosperity. Our favorite is of the cow who got herself tangled up in one of the swings in the apple tree we call the "swing tree." She had one leg through it, as if she fully intended to climb on and try it out.

With the photo opportunity fully taken advantage of, we gathered for a strategy meeting. It was our theory that if we could only stir up our visitors and get them trotting, they would head up the mountain road and go home to their own fields. We got them stirred up, all right. By whooping and hollering—a task the children enjoyed immensely—we got them moving. We flailed our arms, made ghastly faces, and from our fields into the road they ran. But they headed not up, rather down the road.

Like the road above us, the road below us runs through solid woods, ending in a small clearing where Mr. Merchant, a woodcutter, lived as lord of the valley with his nondescript dog, Blackie, and two wondrously large and gentle workhorses, Dolly and Polly. I have always wished I could have seen Mr. Merchant's face when the herd of cattle came stampeding down the hill to his cabin in the clearing. Dolly and Polly he was used to having run free. But I am sure he never experienced anything like this.

About an hour later, the cattle were back up in our fields. With his usual

engineer-type cap on his head and his long staff in hand, Mr. Merchant and his faithful Blackie had driven the cows before them. Reaching our open fields, the cattle could not resist the temptation to fan out and enjoy another excursion among the apple trees. For all I know, maybe they, themselves, were interested in another "photo opportunity."

In any case, there they were, cavorting and enjoying themselves while Mr. Merchant, Blackie, our three children, my wife and I planned our strategy for the next phase of the battle.

Having made a botch of the first attempt to shoo them home, I modestly deferred to Mr. Merchant. He devised a great plan. He and Blackie would stir up the cows and get them running out of the orchard into the road, at which point I—with a long pole in my hands—would stand my ground and direct them up the road and over to their home fields.


Mr. Merchant and Blackie summed up the requisite energy to stampede the cattle, which came running out of the field at a fast clip and headed straight at me and my pole. So far, the plan was working flawlessly. I vigorously motioned the direction in which they should gallop. They, however, were not interested in my directions. They preferred not to head up over the hill. I gained the distinct impression that they were planning to run straight—over me. Now we all know,

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# Goings On

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winds of the Maine Chamber Players*,  
8:00 p.m. Admission free, donations  
accepted. Fri., July 16, *Cabaret*, dancing  
to the big-band music of Gordon  
Howe's Orchestra, 8:00 - 12:00 p.m.  
For tickets, call 998-4389 or 782-2339.  
Mon., July 19, *Dixie Gold, Dixieland  
Jazz Concert*, 7:30 p.m. Donations.

## WESTERN MAINE ART GROUP

July 10 *Sidewalk Show & Sale* (Rain  
date July 17). July 13-24, *Watercolors  
& Oils of Nina Lumbard Lunn*. July  
27-31, *Paintings of Duncan Slade &  
Laura Johnston*.

## SUMMER FESTIVALS

**July 3-5: NAPLES BUSINESS  
ASSOCIATION 4th OF JULY  
EVENTS:** July 3, Children's Parade  
on the Village Green, 10 a.m.; Carni-  
val 10:30, Street Dance at the Fire  
Barn, 8:30 p.m. July 4, Carnival at  
10:30 a.m.; Pontoon Parade at noon;  
Grand Parade at 2:00; Fireman's  
Supper in the Fire Barn at 5:00 p.m.  
July 5, 10:30 a.m. Carnival; Fire Truck  
Parade at 11:00; Fireman's Muster at  
1:00 p.m. on the Village Green; Boat  
Parade at 2:00 p.m.; Band Concert on  
the Village Green at 6:00 p.m.

**July 7: ARTS & CRAFTS FESTI-  
VAL, FRYEBURG.** First Congrega-  
tional Church, Main Street, Weds.  
July 7 2:30 p.m. Old-fashioned Church  
Supper at 5:30; Square Dancing in the  
street at 7:30.

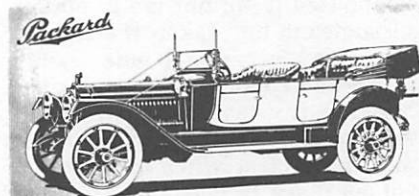
**July 10: NORWAY HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY'S ANNUAL SALE.** Old  
magazines, books, food at the Soci-  
ety's building on Main Street, Sat. July  
10th.

**July 10-11: QUILT SHOW &  
SALE, BRIDGTON.** Sponsored by  
Chickadee Quilters, July 10 & 11, 10  
a.m. - 5 p.m., Bridgton Town Hall,  
Rte. 302, Bridgton. For further infor-  
mation, contact Marlise Libby, 51  
Main Street, Bridgton, ME. 04009.

**July 10, 15, 17, 24, Aug. 7, 14,  
28: FOOD, ARTS & CRAFT SALES,**  
in Naples.

**July 11, 25, Aug. 1, 8, 22: BAND  
CONCERTS ON THE VILLAGE  
GREEN, NAPLES:** 6:00 p.m.

**July 17: GOODCHEERS SOCIETY  
ANNUAL SUMMER SALE.** Food,  
crafts, plants, hand-work, white ele-  
phants, Christmas & Children's  
tables, plus collectables, July 17th  
from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., South Paris  
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A special luncheon will be served  
from 11 to 1.



**July 24: PARIS HILL FOUND-  
ERS DAY.** Featuring 4th Annual  
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24th (Rain date July 25th), 9 a.m. - 4  
p.m. Gigantic flea market, crafts &  
antiques. Sponsored by Hamlin  
Memorial Library. Admission: \$2.50  
adults, \$1.00 children. Featuring: Rolls  
Royces, Duesenbergs, Packards, Stutz  
Bearcat, and more. Sabbathday Lake  
Shakers will be exhibiting.

**July 31: BEAN HOLE BEAN  
FESTIVAL, NORWAY.** For more in-  
formation, turn the page.

**August 7: CRAFT FAIR & FLEA  
MARKET, SOUTH PARIS.** Sponsored  
by Norway-Paris Business & Profes-  
sional Women's Club at the Park,  
opposite South Paris Post Office (on  
Rte. 26). 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (Rain  
date Aug. 14th.)

**August 7: 29th ANNUAL FAIR,  
CHRIST CHURCH, NORWAY,** corner  
Paris & Green Streets. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
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traits and still lives by the Cape Por-  
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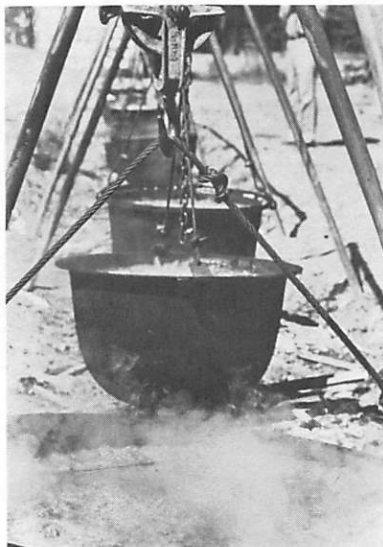
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12:00 p.m. - Serving Beans



1:00 p.m. - Fireman's Muster  
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4:00 p.m. - Square Dance  
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Photos by Bill Haynes

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and have known since classical times, that discretion is the better part of valor.\* If they insisted on having their way—and they did have determined looks on their brown and white faces and in their big bovine eyes—who was I to argue? They turned, all right, just at the right moment to keep from running over me, and ran straight down into the valley to Mr. Merchant's cabin. He and Blackie set off at a fast clip after them.

To round out this story, I should tell you how those cattle got back up over the mountain. But I can't. After their departure the second time, my family and I were happy to remember that we had pressing business in town. When, some time later, I had a chance to chat with Mr. Merchant, he somewhat modestly spurned any credit for the accomplishment. Since Mr. Merchant was not modest by nature, I was inclined to believe another neighbor's report that the owner of the herd, having discovered the gate open, had searched out the cows and they—apparently somewhat more used to taking directions from him—docilely led him home.

As for us, we still have pictures to prove to one and all of our skeptical city friends that, for a while at least, we had our own herd.

*\*The classic formulation of this principle, of course, is Shakespeare's in King Henry the Fourth, Part One (Act V, sc. iv, 1.122).*

Ernest Cassara  
George Mason University,  
Fairfax, Virginia, and  
Greenwood, Maine

## GOING BAREFOOT

When I was a child, going barefoot spelled Freedom with a capital F and Summer with a capital S. It started right after school left out. "Can't we go barefoot, Mom, please?" my sister and I would plead.

After appropriate admonitions (issued to get her off the hook when we cut a foot or stubbed a toe, I later learned when I became a mother), she would say, "All right," and then reiterate, "But do be careful."

My sister and I would untie our sneakers and, with the toe of one foot on the heel of the other, push until the empty sneaker fell to the ground. After repeating this process, we would pull off our socks inside out and stuff

them into the sneakers. These we would place on the doorstep, and from there head out onto the cool green grass, flexing our toes in our new-found freedom. No matter how hot the sun, the grass always felt cool to bare feet.

Bare feet brought a whole new dimension to life. They were excellent for playing hopscotch on packed ground because it was easier to avoid the lines without shoes on. Besides, the brown earth, cold and hard, felt good to our pavement-scorched feet. Bare heels rounded the marble hole to perfection. Playing barefoot in the sandbox was perhaps best of all then you didn't have to worry about getting sand in your shoes—and what's more uncomfortable than shoes full of sand?

On hot days when we were allowed to "go under the hose," we would make tracks with our wet feet on the white concrete sidewalk that ran the length of the front of our house. It was easy to tell who had flat feet by the tracks.

When we went to our camp on the Five Kezars in North Waterford, we would count on going barefoot the whole time we were there. Going barefoot in the country acquainted us with many new surface textures from the sandy beach to the pebbly driveway, which always evoked cries of "Uhhh!" and "Ouch!" After riding in the old Lafayette with its upholstered floors, we would jump out onto the hot pavement in the village with more ouches

and scramble over the worn wooden sill of Leon Lovejoy's Cloverleaf Store. Country dirt was clean dirt, and Leon didn't mind bare feet. We padded across the oiled wood floor with no thought of splinters or contamination.

After we bought our Tootsie Rolls and Oh Boy Gum, we stepped back out onto the hot tar, amid more squeals, got into the car with its soft floor, and set off for camp and its pebbly driveway. Then we raced down the rutted path to the cool, firm sand of the beach and into the water with its softer sand. No question about it, going barefoot put us in touch not only with the world around us, but with the center of our being.

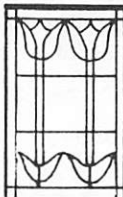
The soles of our feet grew hard and the tops burned brown. Mother doggedly kept after us to wash them with a brush when we bathed. Otherwise the dirt would get so ground in we'd never have clean feet again, she said.

When the first day of school came in September, we clothed our freshly scrubbed feet in respectable white ankle socks and tucked them into sturdy laced brown oxfords. Out came the bandages for blistered heels. After a week of suffering from blisters and too tight shoes ("Your feet are spread out because you went barefoot all summer!") we settled into the restrictions of shoes and socks. Besides, the days were getting colder.

Yes, freedom and summer and bare feet were synonymous in the good old days. Then something happened. A simple childhood pleasure was adopted

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## PLACING MEMORIES

I hope someone identified the picture, *Can You Place It?* in your March issue. It is The Songo, a summer hotel in North Bridgton. I worked there two summers, years ago My home was nearby.

Helen Denison  
Norway

## BACK ISSUES

A friend of mine who lives in Fryeburg, Maine told me about a recent issue of your magazine which contained an article about Mr. Jesse Rowe, who taught grammar school in Hiram, Maine for many years. I was privileged to be among his many pupils, and have many fond memories of those days.

My friend did not know the publisher of *BitterSweet*, or the date of the issue. Since I live in the suburbs of Washington, D.C., I telephoned the office of Congresswoman Olympia Snow and they were good enough to track down for me the information about how to contact you.

Ann Porter  
Silver Spring, Maryland

I believe Vol. 5, No. 4 (April, 1982) had an article on the masonry stoves and Mr. Jaakkola of Otisfield, Maine. Please forward at your earliest convenience . . . as we are planning to build one of the stoves and our new house is under active construction.

Marie Whalen  
Machias

**Ed. Note:** Back issues are generally available in our office and will be mailed to anyone who sends \$2.00 for each. Almost all of the issues since the beginning—Nov., 1977—have a few copies left.

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# Can You Place It?

If you recognize this locality, write us at P. O. Box 6, Norway, ME 04268. The first to identify it will receive a free subscription to *BitterSweet*.




Last month's *Can You Place It* was the Grand Trunk station in Portland, Maine—as featured in our May issue in an article on the Bryant Pond quarry stone from which it was built. Mildred Irons of South Paris was the only one with a good enough eye not to be tricked. We'll give you a hint about this month's photograph: it is a place that no longer exists, but used to stand in Norway.

## ... Page 39 Readers' Room

by teenagers who carried it into adulthood. To them going barefoot spelled Freedom with a capital F too, but to thousands of others it spelled Repulsive with a capital R. And because it was repulsive, and for probably no other reason, laws were passed prohibiting one from entering a store with bare feet. Signs were printed and hung on doors across the nation: NO BARE FEET ALLOWED. These signs even found their way into the small

country stores because grown-ups with bare feet found their way there first. The signs and the laws made no age distinction. Children sadly put on their shoes to go to the village store, and the fun of going barefoot was lost to a whole generation of children who will never know the freedom of bare feet, all day, all summer.

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